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CWC LAUNCHES A CAMPAIGN OF PRAYER

Make 1986 a year of peace, amity and national reconciliation, declared the Executive and National Committees of the Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC). This resolution follows the earlier announcement of Mr Thondaman, the leader of CWC and a cabinet minister of the Sri Lankan government, that he would quit if the long overdue problems of the plantation workers, especially the fact that 400,000 of them remain "stateless", are not solved by the end of 1985.

President Jayawardene has been for a long time saying that 90,000 of the "stateless" Tamil estate workers would be granted citizenship. Recently there had been vague statements that the number 90,000 referred to the estimate made at the time of operation of the Shastri-Sirimavo pact, and that with natural increase the number is now about 400,000. Still, up to now these have only been words. There has been no evidence of any legislative or executive action.

Political circles wonder if the seemingly innocuous resolution and the accompanying full page advertisements in several daily newspapers on 6 December '85, which included the statement "If anyone seeks a Dharma Yudda (holy war) after being elected on a mandate that promised Dharmista (righteousness), then that person should give up his seat and seek election on a war-ticket", hide a veiled threat.

Further pointed references to a "war psychosis" in the upper echelons of the government and the announced decision to launch "various campaigns of concrete and practical action" between Thai Pongal (14 January '86) and the Sinhala and Tamil New Year (15 April '86) to achieve outstanding demands, especially that of citizenship, give weight to this interpretation.

The restiveness of the CWC is understandable. Some members have been unhappy about Mr Thondaman's association with the Sri Lankan government. His contention has been that he could serve his people better by being in the government rather than outside. The inhuman situation of a large number of estate workers who continue to remain disenfranchised will make the position of Mr Thondaman more and more untenable.

What positive and productive action can the CWC take in the present political situation when strikes and all other forms of peaceful protests are disallowed? Observers point to the successful use of "prayer meetings" during working hours by the CWC on an earlier occasion.

If the CWC goes ahead, the timing of their threat can be very embarrassing to President Jayawardene. He has threatened several times that he will return to a military solution of the ethnic crisis if a political solution, on his own terms, is not reached before the end of 1985.

Clashes on the estates will not merely paralyse the tea industry at this economically difficult time, but the slaughter of Tamil estate workers by the security forces or by storm-troops of the government, posing as "home guards", will strengthen the demand in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, for direct intervention by the Indian Army to protect Tamils in Sri Lanka.

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Tamil TIMES

The Beast Roams South

AT THE time of enactment of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in Sri Lanka, knowledgeable sources warned that the provisions of the Act, though presented as a necessary evil to control Tamil militancy, would in time be used to suppress democratic rights all over the island.

This warning has now been proved correct by the recent arrests by the Sri Lankan security forces of a number of Sinhala youths on purely political grounds, that they oppose government policies. The "crime" they would appear to have committed is to attempt to bring about inter-racial harmony in Sri Lanka.

The PTA allows incommunicado detention up to eighteen months. Several international bodies have investigated and condemned the conditions in Sri Lankan jails and the torture that goes on there virtually all the time. The latest such report, which we published in detail in our November issue, is by Amnesty International.

The indications are clear. All those, whether in the North or in the South, whose political stance does not correspond with the Government's, are liable to imprisonment for unknown periods of time; the Sri Lankan government is prepared to fill its jails with all those opposed to it; the Sri Lankan security forces, with the backing of the Government, are prepared to go to any lengths to crush opposition.

What is especially disquieting is that those recently arrested are forward thinking persons and have been actively working to promote inter-communal harmony in the island.

It is a well known manoeuvre and practice of despots clinging on to power, whatever the cost, to divert the attention of the populace elsewhere; if necessary creating such diversions and bogey threats, to justify internal suppression of critical evaluation of the regime. If the fantasy external threats provide the opportunity to physically strengthen itself and provide the pseudo-legal authority to suppress all opposition, so much the better, as far as the tyrants are concerned.

The population that gets carried away by the rhetoric of impending loss of beloved cultural possessions and threats to its existence soon finds that the authority it mistakenly granted to the war-mongers becomes the very chain the unsuspecting population itself gets tied up with.

The Tamils of Sri Lanka have had and continue to have just and legitimate grievances. They have had no security of life, limb or property in a unitary Sri Lanka. They tried through discussions and peaceful political means to get redress for their genuine fears. The total absence of sincerity on the part of the rulers pushed the impatient youth, with no prospects for the future, ultimately to resort to militant activities.

Even at that stage, instead of examining, analysing and acknowledging the roots of the unrest, all that the government did was to obtain for itself more and more repressive authority, which it now not surprisingly is directing against the Sinhala people themselves. The beast of PTA that was unleashed against the Tamils in the North and East of Sri Lanka is now roaming South.

We condemn the arbitary deprivation of liberty. Tamil Times associates itself with the already expressed demand of other organisations – political, non-political, trade unions, religious leaders and intellectuals – "Charge them or Release them".

Jayawardene's Last Gamble?

THERE must be very few Sri Lanka Tamils who will see in the restoration of Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic rights anything to rejoice over, nothing much on which to nourish hopes of securing political justice in Sri Lanka by negotiation. The bitter history of her own past regime is too recent. The wounds remain unhealed from her introduction of discriminatory quotas in education, the squeeze upon Tamil opportunity in public employment and the gradual militarization of the "Tamil problem". The long years of draconian emergency rule, the gross violation of human rights by Mrs. Bandaranaike's state apparatus – as Amnesty Interntional regularly reported – and the repeal of minority safeguards under her 1972 Constitution can never be forgotten, nor forgiven, by the Tamil people. In a real sense, she is the fountain-head of today's torrents of bloodshed.

Moreover, the suspicion must be strong, indeed overwhelming, that it is a political manoeuvre, not a suddenly discovered respect for democratic norms and values, which has dictated President Jayawardene's recent move. After all, the front line of the struggle to defend Tamil lives and interests now stretches from Vavuniya to Trinco and Batticaloa and the battered United National Party ranks need all the political support they can lay their hands on, domestic and foreign.

Nevertheless, we should be cautious in our own response to this new development. For Mrs. Bandaranaike, however depressing her public playing to the Sinhalese gallery these last 18 months, has been surprisingly candid in her private conversations.

Well placed sources here have reported her apparently genuine anxieties about the gradual destruction of Sri Lanka's political institutions, economy and legal system as the result of the failure to find a solution to Tamil demands. She is even said, by a highly reliable witness, to have expressed her admiration, in private, of the heroism of Tamil youth, in particular Kuttimani. "If they are prepared to die for their cause", she reportedly declared, "then the Sinhalese must respect them, and" (as she put it) "do something more substantial".

In the event, her own anti-Tamil chauvinism and ambition for power will no doubt overwhelm whatever she may have learned while in 'exile' of the disaster which is engulfing Sri Lanka. After all, a leopardess can no more change its spots than a leopard! But one thing she appears to have grasped, even if she only chooses to admit it in private, that the Tamil cause is serious and irreversible, and that Sri Lanka's economy and institutions are collapsing. Whether she now has the courage to distance herself from the suicidal policies of Colombo is another matter. But the writing is on the wall. And we know that, behind closed doors for five years, she has read it.

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TULF DEMANDS A LINGUISTIC STATE

CREATION of a linguistic state with complete legislative and executive powers in the subjects of law and order, land development and education, is the demand of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).

At the request of the Indian authorities, particularly of the Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi, the TULF has submitted a set of proposals on the effective devolution of powers to the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. These proposals also represent the response of the TULF to the Sri Lankan government's proposals which were rejected by the TULF as not meeting Tamil aspirations. According to the TULF proposals, the Northern and Eastern provinces together will constitute a (Tamil) linguistic state in a federal set-up with the rest of the island. The state will have as its constitutional head a Governor, appointed by the President. The legislative powers will be vested in an elected Assembly. The executive powers will be vested in a Council of Ministers headed by a Chief Minister. Each State will have a High Court and subordinate courts.

The TULF also suggests that all those who are not citizens of a foreign country and were resident in Sri Lanka as of November 1981 should be granted Sri Lankan citizenship.

TULF suggests weightage in the State Assembly for the Muslims living in the Tamil linguistic region and adequate representation in the island's Parliament for Hill-country (estate) Tamils, who do not live in geographically contiguous areas.

History

The recent history of proposals and counter proposals for the solution of the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka goes thus: In the early fifties, the "Federal Party" proposed a federal system. (Hence the unofficial name of the party).

Towards the latter part of that decade, the then Prime Minister of Ceylon, Mr S W R D Bandaranaike drew up proposals for what was described as Regional Councils. The pact was unilaterally abrogated and the proposals were not implemented. In the sixties District Councils were talked of, but nothing came out. In the latter part of the seventies J R Jayawardene implemented a scheme of District Development Councils. Even though these were originally presented as a scheme of devolution of power from the Centre, in implementation they proved to be only empty shells.

After the 1983 July massacre of Tamils in Sri Lanka, the President agreed in New Delhi to a set of proposals, popularly known as Annexure C proposals, being part of a wider document. It envisaged Provincial Councils with Trincomalee harbour coming under Central administration. On his return to the island, the President, without making any attempts to present the proposals to Parliament, entered into lengthy discussions with TULF and various other political, quasi-political and religious groupings.

After a year of protracted discussions, the President's proposals were once again District Councils with some options which were described by the Minister for National Security, Mr Athulathmudali, as "a clothes lines on which various proposals could be hung". In spite of it being presented as the outcome of the "All Party Conference", implementation was postponed.

The next stage started with the India-arranged talks between Sri Lankan government representatives and representatives of Tamil militants and TULF, at Thimphu in the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. The government once again blew the dust off and presented the original District Council proposals granting the Councils authority to "license bicycles, inspect latrines, shoot rabid dogs and do nothing else worth talking about".

Not surprisingly the Tamil groups rejected the proposals outright and proclaimed four cardinal principles by which they would assess any further proposals. (1) Tamils of Sri Lanka constitute a Nation. (2) They have a home-land. (3) They have the right of self-determination. (4) All Tamils who have adopted Sri Lanka as their motherland be entitled to full citizenship.

After the breakdown of the Thimphu talks, the Sri Lankan representative, Hector Jayawardene, the President's brother, stopped over at Delhi and presented to the Indian authorities a slightly modified proposal which allowed creation of a Provincial Council in the Northern Province but only District Councils in the East. Again the powers granted were very limited.

TULF and the militants rejected these too. The militant groups (LTTE, TELO, EROS & EPRLF) under the umbrella Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF) declared that they would no longer take part in any negotiations with the Sri Lankan government since the government continued to carry on with its military actions, using the talks only as a tactic to buy time; but they would not be a hindrance to anyone having discussions with the Sri Lankan government. Now the TULF has put forward in detail its own proposals. President Jayawardene found the ball in his court.

He ridiculed the idea of the Chief Minister of the State being sworn in by a Governor as opposed to his proposal of a Chief Executive being appointed by "an elected President". Mr Amirthalingam, leader of the TULF, retorted that in the event of a conflict of opinion, a confrontation between the Chief Minister and the titular Head of the State will have a different significance to a confrontation between the regional body and the Country's President.

It is reported that the Government of India is trying to arrange further direct talks between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil representatives. It is acknowledged that a lot of spadework needs to be done before both parties meet. The Indian experts on Sri Lanka feel the TULF proposals are eminently reasonable since what is sought approximates to roughly the type of provincial autonomy provided for in the Indian Constitution. But some sections of opinion in Delhi would like to first narrow down the wide gap still existing between the Sri Lankan government's offer of limited devolution and the TULF demand for greater autonomy, before bringing the two sides to the negotiating table.

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Campaign for Release of Political Prisoners Gathers Momentum

THERE has been a disturbing new development in recent weeks: the widespread arrests of youths in South, apparently on political grounds. Reports regarding some of these arrests have appeared in the press and the Minister of National Security has also made reference to them in Parliament. Yet there is no exact information regarding the number of people taken in or the places where they are detained. Reports that trickle through indicate that some of the detainees were taken into custody on the streets or removed from their homes by night. There are also reports that when a person wanted could not be found by the security organisations, members of his family had been taken in as hostages.

Since these arrests have taken place under the special powers that the government wields, both under Emergency regulations and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, there are serious questions which arise regarding the rights as well as the safety of persons taken into custody. Detainees can under these powers be kept in any place the authorities choose, so that they do not enjoy the minimum rights and safeguards enjoyed by those held in normal prisons. They can at the will of the authorities be cut off from access to relatives, friends and lawyers, who remain ignorant even of their place of detention. Under these conditions they can be defenceless against torture or even deprivation of life.

Further where the government is free to arrest and detain persons without the obligation which exists under the normal law to produce them before the courts, there is a grave danger that these powers can be used against members of opposition parties and other organisations which are viewed with disfavour by the authorities so as to stamp out legitimate democratic rights of dissent and criticism.

A meeting of representatives of progressive and democratic organisations, political parties, trade unions and intellectuals which met to discuss the threat to civil liberties and democratic rights presented by this new wave of arrests decided to launch a broad-based campaign to compel the government to act in conformity with the normal processes of law. This is particularly so in view of the fact that no valid evidence has so far been produced to justify the application of Emergency laws or of the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, to the arrests referred to. We strongly urge the government to desist from the use of these laws to persecute their political opponents.

In the meantime, we call upon the government to make public the names of all those arrested, to give due access to families and lawyers, to ensure that they are held in humane conditions and free from harassment, physical coercion, torture and death. We also urge that inquiries and investigations are expeditiously conducted and the detainees either released or produced before the judiciary, under the normal laws.

* STOP THE WITCH-HUNT OF POLITICAL OPPONENTS

* RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

* GUARANTEE SAFETY OF LIFE AND IMMUNITY FROM HARASSMENT, ILL TREATMENT AND TORTURE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

Charles Abeysekera, Co-ordinator, CROPP, GCSU Building, 90 Parsons Road, Colombo 2. 11 December 1985.

Convenors of the first CROPP meeting held on 9th December 1985

Rev. Batapola Anomadassi High Priest, Rev. Wellawatte Gnanabbiwansa Thero, Rev. Yohan Devananda, Amarasiri Dodangoda M. P., Reggie Siriwardena, Prof. Kumari Jayawardene, Prof. Carlo Fonseka, Prof. Osmund Jayaratne, Vivienne Gunawardene, Jayarathna Maliyagoda, Sumithra Gunawardene, Vijaya Kumaratunge, Dharmasena Pathirajah, Premasiri Kemadasa, Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Vijitha Gunaratne, Dr. Newton Gunasinghe, Dr. Willie Senanayake, Charles Abeysekera, Gunasena Mahanama, S.G. Punchihewa, Dayan Jayatilleka, H.N. Fernando, Sunil Bastian, Sunila Abeysekera.

Signatories to the Attached Statement:

Rev. Tissa Balasuriya, *Centre for Society & Religion,* Dr. Frank Jayasinghe, *International Centre for Ethinic Studies,* Radhika Coomaraswamy, *International Centre for Ethinic Studies,* Edmund Samarakkody, *Revolutionary Workers Party,* Y. P. de Silva, *Sri Lanka Mahajana Party, Sirilunghe Jayasuriya, Nava Samasamaja Party,* Meryl Fernando, *Workers Marxist League,* Redley Silva, *Movement for Inter Racial Justice & Equality,* Luxman Gunasekera, *Student Christian Movement,* G. D. Dahanayaka, *Sri Lanka Jathika Guru Sangamaya,* Rev. Buddiyagama Chandaratana Thero, *Humanitarian Bhikku Organisation,* Audrey Rebera, *Women Action Committee,* Rani Saverimuttu, *Sathyodaya,* Nimalka Fernando, *NCC - Development Commission,* Jeffrey Abeysekera, *Christian Workers Fellowship,* Paul Perera, *Community Education Centre,* W. L. D. Anton Marcus, *Industrial Transport & General Workers Union,* Padmini Palliyaguru, *Ceylon Teachers Union,* D. B. S. Jeyaraj, *Journalist,* S. R. Winifreeda, *Justice & Peace Commission,* Kalpana ISSAC, *Journalist,* Leela ISSAC, *Lecturer,* Primal de Silva, *University Student,* Ajit Serasundere, *University Student,* Thisarani Gunesekera, *University Student,* L. K. Gamage, *University Student,* Laxman Gajasinghe, *Christian Workers Fellowship,* D. S. Mallawaarachchi, *Eksath Kamkaru Samithiya,* Saman Jayalath, *University student,* Sepali Kottegoda, *International Centre for Ethnic Studies,* Nirmala Salgado *International Centre for Ethnic Studies,* W. T. Chudawansa, *L. B. C. L.,* Ananda Lal Liyanage, *Justice & Peace Commission,* Sunanda Deshapriya, *Movement for the Defence of Democratic Rights,* Sriyani Perera, *Women and Media,* T. B. C. Fernando, *Ceylon Teachers Union,* Marshall Fernando, *Student Christian Movement,* Hiran Nonis, *Student Christian Movement,* Pulsara Liyanage, *Women Action Committee,* Richard Dias, *Citizens Committee for National Harmony,* Ainsley Samarajeewa, *Movement for the Defence of Democratic Rights,* Anand ISSAC, Bandra Senanayake, *Lecturer,* G. W. Adams, *University Student,* Wimal Gamage, Hema Matharage, *Women Centre,* R. P. D. Dayananda, W. T. Wanniarachchi, D. A. Gunawardene, Janaka Wimalaratne, Kumudini Samuel, *Movement for Inter Racial Justice & Equality.*

9 December 1985

Over 200 Sinhala Youths Arrested

IN A widespread sweep of the southern, predominantly Sinhala areas of Sri Lanka, the security forces have taken into custody a large number of Sinhalese. The arrests appear to be the start of a general crack-down on all types of opposition to the government. The authorities showed their determination by executing the detentions not only under emergency regulations but under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Some youths were taken into custody at Dambadeniya for allegedly putting up posters carrying anti-government slogans.

Among those arrested is Mr Indika Gunawardena, general secretary of the Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE), son of the veteran left leader Philip Gunawardena and brother of Dinesh Gunawardena MP.

Government Version

Official reports allege that those arrested in South Sri Lanka belonged to "New Tendency" faction of Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and conspired to overthrow the government. Another allegation is that this faction was involved with a Tamil militant group in the Nikawaratiya police station raid.

According to Sri Lankan security forces, a raid on a house at Wattegama near Kandy, revealed a cache of arms. Uduwarage Henry Perera, leads this group, according to police sources.

Arrests Under PTA

Since the arrests were under the PTA, the detentions are likely to be for indefinite periods and in the course of their detention some or all of them are likely to be exposed to varying degrees of torture that has become almost a constant accompaniment of detention in Sri Lanka.

Suicide

Two months ago, one Sinhala political prisoner, kept and tortured for more than two months, was found mysteriously hanging inside the bathroom, to which prisoners do not have ready access. Doubts were raised as to whether the "hanging" was a cover-up operation.

Official communiques lack so much credibility, that the proverbial pinch of salt is thought to be totally insufficient. If the allegation of a "North-South" connection is true, undoubtedly it introduces a new dimension to the crisis in Sri Lanka. With the tea estate workers also threatening disruptive actions, the government is likely to feel under seige. It has the option of a very disastrous confrontation or a just solution to the ethnic and economic problems.

Circulation Manager's ABC of Woes and Wants –

Agents, Benefactors, Correspondents – throughout the Tamil Diaspora.

Please write to:

P.O. BOX 304, LONDON, W13 9QN.

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A DECLARATION BY THE CEYLON WORKERS' CONGRESS

1986 A YEAR OF PEACE, AMITY AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

The following declaration was adopted at a meeting of the National & Executive Council of the CEYLON WORKERS' CONGRESS held on December 3, 1985 under the chairmanship of its President Mr. S. THONDAMAN, M.P.

This joint meeting of the National Council & Executive Council of the Ceylon Workers Congress held on December 3, 1985 has decided that the time has come to take concrete and practical action to meet the dangers and difficulties that presently threaten the plantation workers as well as the other sections of the population.

Why the CWC joined . . .

The Ceylon Workers Congress joined the Government of **His Excellency J. R. Jayewardene** and supported it through troubled times in the hope and belief that it would solve, among other matters, the communal question now popularly known as the ethnic problem. **Together with this is the statelessness** of 400,000 plantation workers of Tamil origin. Eight years have gone by since this government came to power but these and many other problems still remain unresolved. More than anything else people want peace and security and this they do not now have.

The failure of the government to solve the communal problem no sooner it came to power has brought into being an extremist movement which has taken to armed violence to establish a separate Tamil state. All the efforts to solve Sinhala-Tamil communal differences as a prelude to ending the violence have not so far been successful. The resulting position is that today the Tamil majority areas in the North and the East are in a state of virtual siege with armed extremists, attacking and killing members of the Security forces who also indulge in similar acts of killing and terror.

Life in the North and East

This is not the time or the place to apportion blame or responsibility for what has happened but we cannot get away from the fact that life in the North and East has been completely disrupted. What is disturbing is that there are indications that similar conditions might encroach into the plantation areas. But even more disturbing is that many Sinhalese have been persuaded by extremists among them that every Tamil, or at least 99% of them, are with the terrorists and that a war should be waged to exterminate them.

President Jayewardene, who has taken great pains to find a solution to this ethnic conflict, has recently found it necessary to tell a meeting of the government parliament group that only a significantly small percentage of Tamils were terrorists and that the Sinhalese should not fall prey to the "foolish propaganda" that a solution to the ethnic problem lay in killing all the Tamils. It has also been very correctly pointed out that to brand and regard all Tamils as terrorists would only drive more and more of them to turn against the Government.

The CWC solution

The Ceylon Workers Congress is convinced that violence neither by the Tamil extremists nor the Government Security Forces can solve the ethnic or any other problem. The CWC believes in non-violence and a peaceful dialogue in the manner taught by Mahatma Gandhi and all the great religious leaders of the World. The first thing that must be done immediately by the Government, together with all men and women of goodwill in this country, is to stop this insane talk about war.

This talk of war is reminiscent of the cry of **Dharma Yuddha** – a kind of Holy War – by certain extremist politicians which had led to the holocaust of July 1983. This cry of Dharma Yuddha was first mooted on page 201 in the book "Save The Buddha Sasana" published by the Seruwila Sacred City Development Society. Is this slogan being raised once again? The question must also be asked whether any person who was elected to parliament on the mandate of the **Dharmista** programme of His Excellency J. R. Jayewardene and now calls for war should not resign his seat and seek re-election, if he so desires, on a mandate for war. The talk of war and the creation of a war psychosis is foolish, self-defeating and suicidal because such a war can only be against a particular community which is as much a part of this multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-linguistic country as any other community.

Day by day the situation is getting worse. In the circumstances the Ceylon Workers Congress feels that it can no longer remain a spectator waiting for others to solve the problem facing the nation. All these years the CWC has wholeheartedly supported the Government in its efforts to solve the communal problem, but no worthwhile results have been forthcoming. The CWC, therefore, now feels that it cannot any longer play a passive role but that it must adopt active measures for positive action to bring peace and amity between the two communities. The country is today in the throes of a chronic stalemate in all matters. It has become the duty of every person – workers, peasants, intellectuals, merchants and others of all communities – to take initiatives to create a new climate that will promote peace, amity and national harmony and thereby solve all outstanding problems.

The Path of Meditation and Prayer

The way in which the Ceylon Workers Congress can mobilise opinion among all communities to induce them to take meaningful steps to establish peace and harmony has engaged our attention for some time. Ever since the three days of prayer and meditation we had organised in June this year to prepare ourselves with divine grace for the task before us, we have become increasingly convinced that at this juncture the path of meditation and prayer is the only way to steel ourselves for the tasks ahead and be ready for the sacrifices that may become necessary for our non-violent endeavours to bring peace and harmony to our strife-torn country.

Peace, amity and harmony can come about only through a process of national reconciliation. And reconciliation can become a reality only when there is acceptance in thought, word and deed that this island belongs to all communities. The Ceylon Workers Congress is fully conscious of the need to carry the message of Pancha-Sila, of Dharmista, of Peace and National Reconciliation to every section of the populaton. One of the major stumbling blocks towards peace and harmony is statelessness and with this must be coupled the civic disabilities imposed on certain individuals for reasons outside the ordinary law. Statelessness moreover is also a **millstone** around the necks of the Sinhalese plantation workers. Statelessness, a result of political victimisation, was legitimised over 35 years ago, and it must be **removed forthwith** for any real improvement in the lot of all plantation workers.

The National Council of the CWC has therefore decided to declare the year 1986 to be a year of Peace, Amity and National Reconciliation. From time to time, during the course of the year,

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TAMIL TRAVAILS IN THE TROUBLED PARADISE

MUTUR BURNS AND BLEEDS

WE REPRODUCE a letter by Mr. S. Shanmuganathan of Kaddaiparichchan in Mutur and also signed by 430 other chief occupants from Chenaiyoor, Kadatkaraichenai, Sambur, Koonitheevu and Kaddaiparichchan to the Government Agent, Trincomalee.

Copies of the letter have also been sent to the Assistant Government Agent, Mutur; Co-ordinating Officer, Trincomalee; the Cease-fire Monitoring Committee; Mr. E. A. Mahroof, M.P., Mutur; and Mr. Sarath Muttetuwegama, M. P. Kalawana.

We, the people of Kaddaiparichan, Chenaiyoor, Kadatkaraichchenai, Sambur and Kunitheevu beg to bring the following facts for your kind and most sympathetic consideration and help.

The people of the above mentioned village are innocent and very peace-loving type. The security forces came into our villages several times and burnt houses, clothes, jewels, vehicles and furniture and caught many of our innocent and guiltless youngsters and familied men and students and shot them to death.

On 27th November 1985, the security forces came to our villages and arrested twenty-one innocent people and shot them to death at Sambur. The villagers took refuge in the schools, temples and jungles. Some of the refugees in the Chenaiyoor temple were attacked by Security forces from helicopters and the injured persons numbering eight are getting treatment at the Mutur Government hospital.

People of these villages are afraid to live in their houses or 'chenas' or in the jungles. Even we are afraid to go out of our houses to the fields or to our gardens.

Therefore we take their opportunity to beg of your kind honour to grant us protection and save us from this disaster.

Though we lost our houses and belongings, the distribution of essential foodstuffs as relief were stopped three months ago.

Indian PM Should be a Witness

"THE final agreement between the Sri Lankan President and the duly authorised representatives of Sri Lanka Tamils should be signed with the Indian Prime Minister present in Colombo", said Mr. Thomas Abraham, former Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka. He continued, "the Indian Prime Minister should be present at such an occasion, not as an overlord but as a witness to the historic occasion, to show India's interest and concern for the future well-being of India's neighbour. There should be a reference to the visit of the Indian Prime Minister in the joint communique. This communique should be placed both in Sri Lankan and Indian parliaments and there should be a solemn and binding assurance that India would not aid or abet any movement that aimed at secession of any part of the territory of Sri Lanka and if such a secession did take place in spite of India's attitude, India would not recognise the new State till Sri Lanka recognised it first".

1986 A YEAR OF PEACE *Continued from Page 5*

the CWC will announce various campaigns to be undertaken to make peace and national reconciliation a reality. Directives will also be issued as to how these campaigns should be conducted.

The First Phase of CWC Programme

For a start, as the first phase of the 1986 programme, the CWC has decided to observe the period from January 14, 1986 to April 15, 1986, that is from Thai Pongal Day to the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year Day, as a period of meditation, prayer and meaningful preparation for our campaign to achieve national conciliation through non-violence and peaceful dialogue.

The entire body of plantation workers will be called upon to participate in the CWC programme. Over the years the plantation workers have devoted their time and energy for the prosperity of the industry unmindful of the difficulties and disabilities under which they laboured. This has been misconstrued by many as **blind support for the economic policies** because of the benefits derived therefrom. This relationship of make-believe is not true and **can no longer be sustained**. The plantation workers now want to come into their own and enjoy the same rights, privileges and benefits other communities in Sri Lanka enjoy. To achieve this, it is necessary for the plantation workers to devote their time every day up to forenoon to the programmes formulated by the CWC. If the management re-arranges the working hours and offers work without loss of wages, as was done in June 1985, continuity of work will be ensured.

We are confident that the plantation workers with the co-operation of all peace-loving people in this country will successfully make 1986 truly a year of Peace, Amity and National Reconciliation.

VILLAGES EVACUATED

PEOPLE living close to Nilveli and Kalawanchchikudy police stations in Sri Lanka have been "advised" to evacuate their houses on the grounds that the authorities are expecting attacks by militants. It is reported that the expectation of the attack is based on the recent series of attacks on public buildings in the Eastern Province. Mills belonging to the Paddy Marketing Board had recently been razed to the ground. Buildings in a large government farm at Karadiyan Aru also had been demolished.

Train Service Suspended

TRAIN service to North Sri Lanka, beyond Anuradhapura, has been suspended since mid December, following a bomb blast in a train that was returning to the yard at Maradana after a run from KKS. The blast damaged a carriage and smashed the axles and wheels.

Assassination Attempt on LTTE Spokesman

A POWERFUL time bomb exploded at 5 am on 23rd December at the Madras residence of Mr. A. S. Balasingham. He escaped unharmed and accused the Sri Lankan Government of trying to assassinate him and create confusion among the militants.

The bomb ripped through a bedroom wall and tore a hole in the ceiling. The bomb probably was planted on a terrace above the first floor bedroom which Mr. Balasingham had occupied until recently. The blast was so powerful that it shattered windows in the neighbourhood and was heard about two miles away.

"It was an assassination attempt against me by agents of the Sri Lankan Government now roaming the streets of Madras," charged Mr. Balasingham.

South African Armoured Cars in Sri Lanka

THE SRI LANKAN security forces are using South African made armoured cars, high ranking security sources confirmed in Colombo. It was denied that 48 such vehicles were deployed in the Tamil areas as alleged by the militant group EPRLF. The authorities said that the number of vehicles used was fewer but did not disclose the exact number.

According to the National Security Minister, the security forces had increased in number and had been supplied with more sophisticated arms.

Sri Lanka has bought US built helicopters, Italian fighter planes, Israeli patrol craft, British scout cars and Chinese small arms as well as South African armoured cars.

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CEASE-FIRE
Strengthens And Weakens

by N. SANMUGATHASAN
a veteran Sri Lankan politician

ANYONE observing the ethnic front in Sri Lanka today could be pardoned if he were overcome with a sense of confusion. There is supposed to be a cease-fire in operation since 18 June 1985, but the two sides seem to have different interpretations about how the cease-fire operates. Although conditions and counter-conditons were bandied about, no one knows definitely what the final accepted conditions were or whether there were any conditions at all. After a lot of wrangling, a cease-fire monitoring committee has been appointed although its composition has not been to the satisfaction of the militants.

Both sides have repeatedly and vehemently accused each other of serious violations of the cease-fire. To an observer, even judging from biased reporting in the controlled press, it is clear that the armed forces are continuing their 'search and destroy' operations. As a result, a large number of militants as well as a greater number of innocents – whose numbers it is impossible to estimate – have been killed. A large number of houses have been burnt and damage to property has been considerable.

Already one of the more militant groups is said to have declared that it would not observe the cease-fire. Some of the militant groups have violated the cease-fire on the plea that they are retaliating against the army's offensive. While this can be understood, the senseless killing of civilians by militants cannot be condoned. My fervent hope is that these are actions of immature, irregular groups functioning outside the control of the main militant groups. The duty clearly falls on the main groups to discipline the miscreants so that the whole movement is not brought into disrepute.

Why Kill?

Violence by the security forces seems to have been worst in the Trincomalee, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya districts. These depradations have been carried out on the theory that the militants were getting ready for an offensive and therefore the military had to act. A great number of those killed may in reality be totally innocent civilians. **No inquiry has ever been held to find out how many of the people so killed ever had fire-arms with them.**

One question no one seems to have had the guts to raise – why is it necessary to shoot to kill? Surely, can't they be maimed by shooting below the knee and captured? Unfortunately, it seems to have become the practice to shoot and kill even motor cyclists, without any proven political associations, for the simple fault of not having obeyed the signal to stop. Cannot the security forces direct the fire at the wheel and thus demobilise the rider? Should he be killed?

Strengthened Government

Was it agreed at the time the cease-fire came into operation that the 600 or more detenus in the Boosa detention camp would be released? If so this has not been done. When the cease-fire monitoring committee visited the camp, they found that the detenus, some of whom had been detained for over a year, had no change of clothing.

Everyone is aware that the government has used the opportunity of the cease-fire to strengthen its armed forces and import sophisticated arms. **There is no doubt that the cease-fire has been more in the interests of the government than that of the militants.**

Disadvantaged Militants

The militants agreed to a cease-fire, against their own interests, only because of the heavy pressure exerted by the Indian government. But, the Sri Lankan government wanted the cease-fire because it had been driven into a corner. It needed some breathing time to recoup its losses. In the recent interview over the BBC the President declared that he would eliminate the "terrorists" within a year. Clearly he does not have the possibilities of a peaceful solution in mind.

The militant groups as well as the TULF have rejected – and rightly so in my view – the last proposal put forward by the Sri Lankan government. They have rejected provincial councils and reiterated their demand for a single Tamil linguistic region based on the merger of the North and the East; and for full regional autonomy for such an area. Clearly, the basis for the continuation of the cease-fire is very slight.

Soured relations

This uncertain period has benefited the government in another way as well. It has spread confusion among the militants and also soured relations between the militants and the people. This is unfortunate but inevitable when a period of military and political activity is followed by a period of inactivity. The militants appear not to have used this period to strengthen themselves politically and militarily. On the contrary, they seem to have allowed their relationship with the people to deteriorate.

Political Immaturity

This is due to nothing but political immaturity and to the lack of understanding of the correct relations that should exist between a guerilla army and the people. Many of the militant groups profess to be Marxist-Leninists but it is doubtful how much of it they have understood and digested.

Even at this stage they should understand the correct relations that should exist between an army that fights for the people and the people. Nobody has explained this question better than Chairman Mao Tsetung. It was he who trained a Peoples' Army to fight a Peoples' War while leading the protracted Chinese Revolution which he led to total victory in 1949. He taught "the army must become one with the people so that they see it as their own army. Such an army will be invincible." Again, "wherever our comrades go, they must build good relations with the masses, be concerned for them and help them overcome their difficulties. We must unite with the masses; the more of the masses we unite with, the better."

Chairman Mao paid such importance to this question that he formulated three main rules of discipline and eight points for attention of the Peoples' Liberation Army (then called the Red Army). "They formed an important part of the political work of the Red Army and played a great role in building the peoples' armed forces, handling relations within the army correctly, forging unity with the masses of the people and laying down the correct policy of the peoples' army towards captives. From the earliest days of the Red Army, Comrade Mao Tsetung required soldiers to speak politely to the masses, pay fairly for all purchases and never impress people into forced labour or hit or swear at people."

The three main rules of discipline which were set out in the spring of 1928 were as follows:

(1) Obey orders in all your actions.

(2) Do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses.

(3) Turn in everything captured.

The eight points for attention set out in the summer of 1928 were as follows:

(1) Speak politely.

(2) Pay fairly for what you buy.

(3) Return everything you borrow.

(4) Pay for anything you damage.

(5) Do not hit or swear at people.

(6) Do not damage crops.

(7) Do not take liberties with women.

(8) Do not ill-treat captives.

It is because the Chinese Peoples' Liberation Army was built by Mao on such sound principles that it became a real Peoples' Army which was welcomed and supported by the people wherever it went.

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Cease-Fire

Continued from page 7

Unless the Tamil militants digest these wise teachings of Mao, they are going to face serious difficulties in their path.

However distorted may be the reports we get about recent happenings in the North, **there can be no doubt that some of the militant groups or other forces acting in the guise of militant groups have indulged in serious anti-social and anti-people activities which have earned the righteous indignation of the ordinary man.** There is no need for us to be specific. We only wish to stress that unless this kind of anti-social and anti-peoples' activities are not put an end to there would be a severe strain on the good relations that once existed between the militants and the people. **The militants cannot be complacent about such an outcome.** The only beneficiary would be the government.

Another question over which the militants have repeatedly blundered is that of how to solve **contradictions among the people.** It was Mao again who taught us that there are two types of contradictions – one between the people and the enemy and the other that among the people – and that these two are totally different in their nature and that they have to be handled differently. He taught that the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy are antagonistic contradictions while, within the ranks of the people, contradictions are non-antagonistic and should be resolved by different means. He also taught that the only way to settle questions of an ideological nature or controversial issues among the people is by the democratic method of discussions, of criticism, of persuasion and education, **and not by the method of coercion and repression.**

He also warned that if the non-antagonistic contradictions among the people are not handled properly, they could turn into antagonistic ones. **That is why we like to point out that kidnapping, torture and execution of comrades who differ from us in one form or another is not a method of solving contradictions and must be condemned.** Such methods only make the contradictions more acute and earn a bad name for the movement that indulges in such activities.

It is to be hoped that the militants will self-criticise themselves and learn not to repeat these mistakes. **Too many precious lives have been unnecessarily lost.**

JOB MARKET SHRINKS

Shadows are falling across the job market in the Middle East. Falling oil revenue is one reason. But more significant is the fact that about two million Arab students in schools and universities outside Middle Eastern countries will be seeking employment in a year or two. After that, expatriates will be needed in these countries only for non-skilled jobs.

"SATURDAY REVIEW" APPEALS

One consequence of the continuing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is the creation of thousands of refugees, who now pose a gigantic relief and rehabilitation problem for President Jayewardene's Government.

The total number rendered homeless since the anti-Tamil violence in south Sri Lanka in July 1983 is estimated at over 250,000.

About 40,000 of them belong to the majority Sinhalese community. They have been driven out of their homes and jobs in the northern and eastern provinces by Tamil guerrillas fighting for a separate state in what they call their "traditional homelands".

The others are Tamils, nearly 100,000 of whom have taken refuge in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The rest are scattered in makeshift camps scattered throughout the northern and eastern provinces, with Jaffna, heartland of the Tamils, temporarily taking the bulk of them.

In September and October alone, Jaffna had to accommodate 19,000 new refugees (4,534 families) from Vavuniya and Trincomalee districts where security forces had run riot, unleashing reprisals on civilians, and where there have been several attacks by guerrillas. These new refugees come on top of the steady flow of people who have been fleeing the violence since 1983.

The Sinhalese refugees include people who had been settled in the two provinces for decades and migratory fishermen. **They have been fairly lucky, because for political reasons the Government has been prompt in instituting relief measures.**

The media, too, has given wide publicity to their plight so that the public has been moved to join in the relief effort.

But the Tamils have been very unfortunate. Many people in the south are not even aware that a refugee problem of such magnitude exists in the north and east because the media has generally ignored them, highlighting only the guerrilla attacks, particularly on Sinhalese civilians.

Government assistance is mostly confined to providing dry rations – to the value of Rs.55 a week to a single person, up to Rs.200 for a family of eight. This at a time when a half-kilo of bread costs Rs.2.75.

At a conference convened to discuss the problems of the northern refugees, the government administrator of Jaffna, M. Panchalingam, confessed that "the refugee problem has grown to such magnitude that it had become necessary to seek the helping hand of non-governmental agencies in order to look after the welfare of the displaced people effectively. What was made available by way of aid by the government was hardly adequate to meet the basic needs of the refugees."

The independent Jaffna-based journal Saturday Review, has launched an appeal for international assistance through the foreign diplomatic missions in Colombo – to tackle what it described as "a mind-boggling situation".

It said: "Almost all the affected people fled their homes with only the clothes they were wearing. Most of them have to get into their 'birthday suits' to do a change of clothing – tattered shirts, sarongs, trousers and sarees, which they wash and hang to dry while they sit in their corners pondering their cruel fate. In some camps the women do not have even such things as sanitary pads or substitutes . . . ."

The Saturday Review has launched its own relief fund which has netted Rs.400,000 so far. But, as we said in an editorial comment, this amount is a "drop – a tear-drop in the ocean – compared to the immensity of the problem."

Food, clothes, fuel and drugs are required immediately. The danger of disease breaking out in the camps is ever-present. Most of the camps are school and temple premises where water and sanitation facilities are grossly inadequate. There have been about 50 deaths from dysentery and diarrhoea. Most affected are the children, who are badly in need of milk foods.

Talks between the guerrilla leaders and the Government have been going on since June **but even after an accord on the ethnic problem is worked out the long-term problem of re-settling the uprooted people, by providing housing and unemployment, will remain.**

This will need resources that the Government cannot find unless it cuts its development programme, imposes more taxes, borrows still more heavily abroad or prunes defence expenditure. The defence bill this year is expected to reach Rs.5.5 billion – 12 per cent of the total government budget.

The resettlement cost for 100 families has been worked out by some private relief organisations as Rs.1.3 million. This is an indication of the vast amounts that would be required to rehabilitate all the affected people.

Oxfam, Redd Barna, Norad and several other non-governmental organisations have come forward with assistance for both short-term and long-term relief, but much more is needed.

"Help, please; help immediately" is the plea of the Saturday Review to the international community.

SCOT RESPONDS

In the issue dated 21 December 1985, "The Saturday Review" carried the following account –

There are kind and caring souls all over the World, who will rush to the rescue of people who are affected by calamities of one sort or another.

Like the Standing Committee of Tamil-speaking-People (SCOT) of London, which has sent £3,000 (Rs 120,000), the highest individual donation so far to the Saturday Review Refugee Relief Fund.

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WHO WANTS SAARC?

by K. R. Manikkan

On the eve of the inaugural meeting of South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (**SAARC**), the Pakistan President General Zia ul Haq said "India must play a positive role to allay the fears of the small neighbours and instil trust and confidence in them. With the recognition that there is nobody big or small, India must realise that all states are equal, independent and autonomous". General Zia has also identified religion as a distinctive feature in the region. Three of the **SAARC** nations – Pakistan, Bangaladesh and Maldives – are Muslim majority areas; India also has a large Muslim population which is larger than Pakistan's, he said.

At the inaugural meeting President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka caused astonishment by calling upon the Indian Prime Minister to lead the organization, with the words – "On him we rest our hopes. He must not fail us. He cannot. Our duty is to help him to the utmost. He should tell us what each of us should do and we must respond as best as we can".

It is quite clear who wants **SAARC**. India is more than twice the size of the other six countries put together and has more than three times their population. The association could not exist unless India agreed it should exist.

The display of public humility by the Sri Lankan President hides the real intentions. The smaller countries around India need **SAARC** more than India. They need it to feel that they too stand on level with the giant India. At the same time they also perceive the organisation as an instrument with which to control and restrain India.

Soon after the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri, the second Prime Minister of independent India, the Congress Party bosses, encouraged and persuaded the reluctant and at that time relatively inexperienced Indira Gandhi to accept the top post. Their expectation was that, since they promoted her, she would always be amenable to their wishes.

Presidents Jayawardene, Zia ul Huq and others are promoting Rajiv Gandhi to a top position in a wider arena. Their expectations are not likely to be far different from the expectations of the Congress bosses vis-a-vis Indira Gandhi. She saw through their machinations. The son cannot fail to see the parallel and act accordingly.

SAARC is a noble concept. Geographically determined regional associations rather than distantly linked groupings based on supposedly sacrosanct political and economic ideologies, are likely to be the next stage in the political development of the whole world. It is appropriate for the peoples of the **SAARC** countries, having common cultural and endogenous traditional links, to work together for their own betterment and for the upliftment of all mankind.

This noble purpose should not be allowed to be diluted, circumvented or corrupted by strutting, selfish glory-seeking despots. The turkey that saw the peacock dance whirled around thinking that it also could dance equally well or even better, goes the ancient saying. A feeling of self-importance to justify their existence might be tolerable of small countries. But a sinister plot to dissipate the energies of a genial giant is not.

There is room for further natural expansion of **SAARC**. It is surprising why Mauritius was left out of the inaugural gathering. Mauritius and Seychelles and perhaps at a later stage Afghanistan should be included in the South Asian Association.

By Courtesy of The Hindu

"OCEAN PEACE CONFERENCE POSTPONED"

INDIA has expressed her deep disappointment at further postponement of the International Conference on the Indian Ocean, probably until 1988. India attached great importance to the early convening of the conference in Colombo as a necessary step for the implementation of the General Assembly declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, said the Indian delegate to the UN General Assembly's ad hoc Committee on Indian Ocean

The tense situation in the Indian Ocean and its increasing militarisation made it imperative to pursue the concept of the Zone of Peace more vigorously than before. The conference would provide an appropriate forum to arrive at agreements that would govern the use of waters of the Indian Ocean solely for peaceful purposes and more importantly the reduction and eventual elimination of external military presence from the area.

The political committee adopted the consensus resolution that requests the ad hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to complete preparatory work relating to the international conference during 1986 in order to enable the opening of the conference at Colombo at an early date soon thereafter but not later than 1988.

The consensus resolution implies agreement by all permanent members of the Security Council, the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean and the littoral and hinterland states for full and active participation and co-operation in the conference.

The United States and other major Western powers have been insisting that the present international climate is not conducive to the holding of an international conference on the Indian Ocean.

The Indian delegate, Savitri Kunadi, reminded the Committee that it was **the very seriousness of the situation in the Indian Ocean, caused by the military presence of great powers, which necessitated the early convening of the conference.**

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TRADITIONAL HOMELANDS: the truth and myths

by Jehan Perera

ANY SITUATION gives rise to vested interests. Even desperate situations provide particular individuals and groups with narrow advantages which they may try to exploit. The Sinhalese Tamil conflict has not shown itself to be an exception.

Some of the Tamil demands made at the Thimpu peace talks and the protests voiced both in Sri Lanka and India against the holding of those talks rather clearly reflected vested interests and not the true interests of the Sinhalese and Tamils.

Ironically enough, hardliners on both Sinhalese and Tamil sides found themselves, temporarily perhaps, united in a long-distance marriage aimed at defeating the purpose of the talks: the Tamil side by making, what the government called, "impossible demands", and the Sinhalese by refusing to see any merit even in sitting down with the Tamil groups.

The four most controversial Tamil demands will be examined in this article.

They are the claims of distinct nationality, self-determination, traditional homelands, and the amalgamation of the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

The two basic themes of this article are first, that these Tamil demands (or positions staked out) are not acceptable as presently articulated, but, second, that the Tamil rights (or interests) these demands are intended to promote are acceptable, and in fact will have to be given governmental recognition if any settlement reached is to be enduring.

National Self-determination

To those influenced by the Western (Anglo-American) political tradition, the elevation of an ethnic group into the more politicized category of a "nation" provided an intellectual and moral platform from which a struggle for national independence may be launched and then justified.

The Ibos of Nigeria couched their struggle for Biafran independence on this basis. But neither in Nigeria nor for that matter in India or the United States were the aggrieved minorities recognized by their respective governments as nations. There were sound reasons for this.

In the Western tradition, a "nation" is generally agreed to be a grouping of people who share a common past and vision for the future that includes full autonomy and the promise of independence. In practical terms, a nation is the largest grouping that effectively commands the loyalty of the people.

Thus, if the Nigerian Ibos, Indian Sikhs or American Blacks had been recognised by their respective governments to be nations, it would have been a tacit acknowledgment that their primary loyalty would not be to their respective states, but to their own "nation". This was obviously unacceptable.

Now it may be true that due to the bitterness generated by the ethnic strife the Tamils do not in fact feel loyalty towards the Sri Lankan state. It may also be true that a prevailing Sinhalese conception of Sri Lanka that derives its inspiration from chronicles of the ancient past categorizes the Tamils as alien invaders.

Therefore, it could be argued, acknowledging the Tamils to be a nation would be merely to recognize an existing fact. But what exists today is by no means the ideal to be "frozen" and carried into the coming decades. In the hierarchy of affiliations that a person may have (ranging from family to village to country), the most encompassing loyalty is the ideal that should be striven for.

At this time in world history, the realities of international politics have established that the largest such unit is the country. Loyalty to Sri Lanka, the island-entity as a whole, should, therefore, take primacy over other sectional loyalties.

Perhaps at some future date the ideal loyalty will grow beyond the country to encompass a whole region (such as a South Asia composed, in addition to Sri Lanka, of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal) and from thereon to all of mankind as envisaged in the great religions.

In contrast to the Western, there is also an Eastern European political tradition in which a nation is not seen politically as such but rather as a natural, cultural creation or a "community of sentiment".

In terms of this tradition, several "nations" may coexist within one political structure. The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are examples of countries with a multitude of ethnic groups most of which are designated as "nations".

This has simply got to be acknowledged by the government and the Sinhalese people. Sterile debates whether the Tamils are justified or not in feeling the way they do is no longer the point – the point is to satisfactorily resolve the most terrible tragedy that afflicts modern Sri Lanka.

To this end, the claims of the Tamils may be given recognition in the following manner: **first,** by acknowledging that Sri Lanka is composed of four major ethnic communities none of which shall be favoured by law; **second,** that none of these communities is by itself a "nation" but together form one; and **third,** that each community possesses a right of autonomy within a commonly shared country. These principles offer a political and moral basis for federation, but not for separation.

An alternative formulation of these same principles can be derived by using the distinction between "nation" and "nationality" drawn by Prof. H. W. Morris-Jones who recently lectured in Sri Lanka. According to him, a nationality refers to a group of people with a clear identity in terms of language and a homeland, but which is compatible with membership in a large nation.

The use of the term "nationality" is therefore less controversial than "nation". In fact there is today a *de facto* recognition of the Sri Lankan communities as nationalities. Thus there could be explicit recognition of the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims as nationalities with limited rights of self-determination, specifically excluding secession but emphasizing those rights that ensure security and the preservation of cultural identity.

Secessionist tendencies in ethnically divided countries such as Nigeria and Canada have more or less perished in such an environment.

The Tamil demand with regard to traditional homelands is one that is presented in terms of a historical right. It bears a curious kinship to Sinhalese claims, for instance that the island is a "Sinhala-dveepa", and is similarly based on a mixture of fact and myth.

It must be remembered that history can be argued and interpreted in more than one way. For instance, Prof. Jerry Pieris, using data compiled in the British period, has shown that broadly speaking only a rather narrow coastal strip of the Eastern Province was occupied by Tamil settlements.

Thus, the Eastern Province has gained the status of a "homeland" in Tamil eyes partly because of recent events that have made clear to them their vulnerability in Sinhalese-majority areas.

But satisfying these political imperatives by "reserving" the Northern and Eastern Provinces for Tamils is hardly a practicable solution because it runs counter to any accepted concept of national unity or economic efficiency.

For instance, a study done by the Marga Institute has demonstrated that both the Northern and Eastern Provinces would suffer from a severe manpower shortage in a few years if future land colonization were to be reserved for Tamils because there simply are not enough Tamils to fill it up to its economic optimum without causing economic dislocations elsewhere.

It is observable, however, that in ethnic conflicts, rationality falters before emotion. The process of coming to a conclusion on an emotion-charged issue seldom begins with a premise (or reasoned argument) from which a conclusion is subsequently worked out.

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NATIONS, NATIONALITIES, TRADITIONAL HOMELANDS

BY AMALI

A Reply to Jehan Perera

IT WOULD seem uncharitable to take to task a liberal Sinhalese writer who publicly acknowledges the alienation of the Tamils from the Sri Lankan polity and calls for a "governmental recognition of Tamil rights". But liberal intentions are not synonymous with intellectual clarity or in-depth understanding of Sri Lanka's national phenomenon. Sometimes expressions of such intentions become nothing more than journalistic balderdash.

According to Jehan Perera there is a certain 'concept' of nation in the Western political tradition and a certain different concept of nation in the East European tradition and since Sri Lanka is a democracy (sic) belonging to the Western tradition the Tamil-speaking people cannot be granted the status of a 'nation'. But he misses the most vital element, almost a self-sustaining element in the whole concept of nationhood. It is the consciousness of and expression of that consciousness by the people concerned that matters. The nation can hardly be viewed as the conferment of a status on a people by an outside agency.

What is a nation? Hugh Seton Watson once offered a seemingly simple answer: 'Many people have tried to find a definition but it seems to me, after a good deal of thought, that all that we can say is, that a nation exists when an active and fairly numerous section of its members are convinced that it exists. Not external objective characteristics, but subjective conviction is the decisive factor. . . . Note that I do not even say, 'when the members believe, but when a section of its members believe'.

It is the Tamil speaking people who determine that they are a nation. To them it does not matter whether the Jayewardene brothers and the UNP government belong to the western political tradition, East European political tradition, no democratic political tradition at all! Fifty years ago the Tamils did not consider themselves a nation. A hundred years ago they would not have considered themselves a nation. Today they consider themselves a nation. The periodisation will be appreciated by any one who knows what nationalism is all about.

EMERGENCE

The emergence of nations has taken place under different historical circumstances. The circumstances were created, albeit unevenly, in different places at different times, in different ethnocultural matrices by the global expansion of the capitalist mode of production or what some would prefer to describe as world-wide industrialisation. Without it the Sinhalese and the Tamils would not have acquired their present consciousness or evolved into nations. Nationalism is at once universal and particularistic. Hence Sinhala nationalism, Tamil nationalism, Welsh nationalism, Polish nationalism etc. – a universal phenomenon with particularising adjectives. The circumstances in which nations emerged in Western Europe, in Central and Eastern Europe, North and South America, Africa and Asia, considerably differ among themselves. The national phenomena of South Asian countries bear many similarities and are comparable. One cannot dump USA, India, Nigeria all in one academic basket and pull out a cap to fit Sri Lanka.

There is, however, a problem of terminology in dealing with different situations or manifestations of the phenomena of nationalism. But labels which are convenient for academic purposes should not be foisted on a people, with constitutional implications. There are nations which identify themselves with a state and states without corresponding nations. There are nations who do not have their own states, or who may aspire to have their own states, and such groups are conveniently called nationalities. Some scholars view the distinction between the two as ambivalent and unclear and prefer the use of a common term "national minorities". But a truly 'national state' remains the ideal, an "unobtainable symbiosis between a complete nation and a complete state". There is a Sri Lankan State. Where is the Sri Lanka nation? Does one create a Sri Lankan nation by describing the Sinhalese and Tamils as nationalities as opposed to nations? Will the Sinhala hegemony over the Sri Lankan State be in any way attenuated by describing the Sinhalese a nationality and not a nation? Or will the Tamil-speaking people be rendered less restive merely because they are granted the status of a nationality and not a nation?

STATE-LESS NATIONS

Two or more nations may decide to live under a single state with appropriate constitutional arrangements. It is the nation which perceives itself to be the victim of oppression and discrimination, which generally seeks to secede from the oppressor state and establish a state of its own. The outcome of such a national liberation venture is often, if not always, determined by the relative strength of the two sides and the role of outside forces. The outcome may be a prolonged impasse.

But there is no general law, as Jehan Perera would appear to claim, when he says that "at this time in world history the realities of international politics have established that the largest (such) unit is the country". On the contrary, it may well be argued that it is the reality of nation-states which determine the course of international politics. The relationships may well be described as dialectical! The nation-states have been the building blocks of the present international system. As a result of the internationalisation of capital, of industry and division of labour, the old criterion of economic viability for individual nation-states has become redundant. This is the era of small states and mini-nationalisms, and nation-states can survive without self-sufficient resources, without even a national market, merely by occupying, as Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out "a strategic position somewhere along the complex circuits of an integrated world economy" and exploiting it to generate an adequate national income. In other words, "at this time in world history", nations, which do not have states of their own and which are victims of persistent discrimination and oppression, are less likely to be inhibited by considerations of size or economic viability in deciding to work towards the establishment of separate states.

How do nation-states against whom the separatist demands are raised, deal with such demands and the movements which give rise to them? I will confine myself to the so-called two traditions referred to by Jehan Perera. One cannot speak of the Western political tradition and of India in relation to the national question and fail to mention such relevant features of these polities as the adherence to the principle of secularism, avoidance of linguistic

Continued on page 17

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THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN SRI LANKA

Professor A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, University of New Brunswick

BEFORE we attempt an answer to this contemporaneous question, the evidence of historians must be invoked to establish the fact of the Tamil presence in Sri Lanka. A. L. Basham states that "Dravidian infiltration into Ceylon must have been going on from the earliest historical times and probably before" (in 'Prince Vijaya and the Aryanization of Ceylon', *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, January 1952, p.67), G. C. Mendis opines that the *Vaddas* probably lived in southern India and walked across before the island got separated from the mainland by a stretch of sea *(The Early History of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1946, p.3). K. M. de Silva in his *A History of Sri Lanka* (London, 1981) is more explicit. He records that "in the second half of the fourteenth century . . . Jaffna under the Aryacakravartis was much the most powerful kingdom in the island . . . their tax collectors were at work on parts of the Gampola kingdom" (p.84). Of pertinence is his reference to the Vanni chieftaincies. These, de Silva writes, bordered the Tamil northern kingdom as well as "the eastern littoral outside the control of the two major kingdoms" (Sinhalese and Tamil, p.84). These chieftains, he states, "owed allegiance to one or other of the two major kingdoms," . . . which during much of this period, "meant an accommodation with the Tamil kingdom" (p.85). De Silva very kindly identifies these chieftaincies for us in page 85, footnote 6 of his history:

the Vanni chieftaincies may be classified under five groups: those of Jaffnapatam; of Trincomalee on the East; the Mukkuva chieftaincies of Batticaloa on the East; the Puttalam on the North-west; the Vadda chieftaincies; and those of the Sinhalese Vanni

De Silva's conclusions were already sustained by K. Indrapala in his "The Origin of the Tamil Vanni Chieftaincies of Ceylon" *(The Ceylon Journal of the Humanities*, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 1970, pp.111-40), by S. Pathmanathan's "Feudal Polity in Medieval Ceylon: An Examination of the Chieftaincies of the Vanni *(The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2, July-December 1972, pp.118-30) and by S. Arasaratnam in "The Vanniar of North Ceylon: A study of feudal power and central authority, 1660-1760" *(The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies;* Vol. 9, No. 2, July-December 1966, pp.101-12. K. M. de Silva notes that by the middle of the fourteenth century, "the Jaffna kingdom had an effective control over the north-west coast up to Puttalam" *(op. cit.*, p.85).

Another way of establishing the fact of the existence of an independent Tamil kingdom owing no allegiance to any superordinate all-island ruler is by determining whether such a kingdom has a separate coinage system of its own.

***Professor A. Jeyaratnam Wilson** was Professor of Political Science at the University of Peradeniya (1969).*

Presently (since 1972), Professor Wilson is Professor of Political Science and Chairman of the Department of Political Science, University of New Brunswick.

Professor Wilson obtained his Ph.D. from LSE., in 1956. In 1977, he was awarded the earned senior doctorate of D.Sc.(Econ.) by the University of London.

Professor Wilson was a Leverhulme Research Scholar, LSE, (1955). In 1964-65, he was University Research Fellow in Politics at Leicester University, England. In 1970-71, a Research Associate in McGill University, Montreal and in 1971-72, Simon Senior Research Fellow at the University of Manchester. In 1977, Professor Wilson was Senior Research Associate at the Columbia University in the City of New York and Visiting Fellow, St. Antony's College, Oxford. In the summer of 1985, he was Visiting Fellow, Nuffield College.

Professor Wilson has been elected for 1986-87 as one of three Simon Professors at the University of Manchester. The Professorships were established in memory of the Manchester Industrialist, Lord Simon of Wythenshawe.

Dr. Wilson is the author of several standard works (Published by Cambridge University Press, Macmillan, London, Christopher Hurst and Company, London (edited) and Frances Pinter, London (edited). He has besides written several articles in learned journals).

H. A. I. Goonetileke, the bibliographer, is useful here. In his "A Bibliography of Ceylon Coins and Currency", Goonetileke refers to S. Gnanaprakasar's "The forgotten coinage of the Kings of Jaffna", C.A.L.R., Vol. 5, Pt. 4, April 1920, pp.172-79. Goonetileke observes *(The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, p.207)

the bull, crescent and trident are clearly Saivaite emblems. The prima facie *impression created by these features and the Tamil characters of the legend is that the coins belong to a line of Saivaite Tamil kings ruling in Ceylon.*

When Sri Lanka was declared a republic in 1972 and framed its own constitution, detailed provision for the use of the Tamil language in judicial proceedings in the Northern and Eastern provinces was made in Article II, Subsections 1-5. President Jayawardene's government was more specific in providing for the use of the Tamil language in the Second Republican Constitution it framed in 1978.

Unfortunately these provisions are observed more in the breach but nevertheless the proviso to Article 22 of the Constitution is worth noting. It states that "the Tamil Language shall also be used as the language of administration . . . in the Northern and Eastern Provinces" while the proviso to Article 24 which deals with judicial affairs affirms that

the language of the courts exercising original jurisdiction in the Northern and Eastern Provinces shall also be Tamil and their records and proceedings shall be in the Tamil language.

For all intents and purposes therefore the Jayawardene government and its predecessor government had in their constitutions recognized that the two provinces are linguistically Tamil.

The ongoing controversy is whether the two provinces should constitute one unit or two units. If the argument hinges on the sizeable Sinhala and Muslim (Tamil-speaking) presence in the Eastern Province, there is one way of handling the problem. This will be to detach the Tamil or Tamil-speaking areas in the Eastern Province and tack these to the Northern Province so as to provide for a single Tamil unit.

That the governing party has a majority of MPs from Eastern Province is a tendentious plea. Two MPs elected on the separatist TULF platform crossed over to the government and the constitution was cynically tinkered with to legitimize their defections. The original provision authorised the party from which an MP defected to replace the MP with another of its choice.

An important matter such as the creation of a single unit cannot be dealt with by sleight of hand; not even in a general election, for such elections are contested on a range of issues. A single question is best resolved by a referendum or plebiscite.

There is an open attempt to change the demographic character of the two provinces. In other parts of the world such attempts were made as during Stalin's regime but not since. After World War II, frontiers were altered and populations exchanged in Eastern and Central Europe. But this was after a world

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A GANGSTER'S NEW YEAR

IN WHAT used to be 'Sri Lanka' – and is now becoming, *de facto*, a territorially divided nation – the Government, which has presided since 1977 over the gradual political, economic and cultural ruin of the country, will be spending 5.8 billion rupees in 1986 on its defence budget. Further, it is anticipating in the current financial year a budget deficit of Rs.30 billions. The Finance Minister, R. de Mel, has himself called such a deficit 'unsustainable'.

It is also expenditure in vain. For in the last twelve months of conflict, or combat, the front-line (whose inexorable movement southwards has so frightened Colombo) has now arrived in Trinco and Batticaloa; even Amparai is in the Tamils' firing-line. The regime's M-19 rifles, helicopter gunships, the militarization of the state, the arming of Sinhalese settlers and gruesome human rights' violations have between them achieved *nothing* of substance; either to restore the writ of Colombo now lost in wide areas of the North and East, or to quell the ardour of Tamil militants for that degree of self-determination which is necessary to protect the Tamils from Sinhalese rapine.

Instead, brutality has bred brutality, and inter-communal vendetta has martyred (with death, injury or homelessness) more thousands of innocents, Sinhalese and Tamil. Equally frightening, the speeches and actions of the Sinhalese leaders – the sly Jayawardene and the tinpot Athulathmudali, in particular – with their falsehoods, their obsessiveness, their doublespeak and contradiction, suggest minds, as well as institutions, in breakdown. On one day, and in one speech, 'the defence situation is improving'; on the next, 'all-out struggle will alone save Sri Lanka'. In one place, at one moment, and to one audience, 'the correct path is non-violence'; at another, our pocket Napoleons (olive-branch in one hand, sub-machine gun in the other) warn their fellow Buddhists to 'get ready for a decisive military action'.

'I am certain', the two-headed Jayawardene cynically declared last summer, 'that the Thimpu negotiations will be a success'. Yet, at the very same time, he was refusing – and had always been intending to refuse – any serious concession to, or even consideration of, Tamil rights and terrors; and, all the while, bloating the already bankrupt state with the military means for a hoped-for 'final solution' of the 'Tamil problem'. There could never, in such circumstances, have been either a ceasefire or a rational, or meaningful, political dialogue between them; and there has been neither.

David Selbourne

Tutor in Politics, Ruskin College, Oxford. Author of **An Eye to India** (Penguin). **Through the Indian Looking Glass** (Zed Press) and **"In Theory and In Practice"**; Essays on the **Politics of Jayaprakash Narayan** (Oxford University Press). He is also a regular contributor to **New Society** London.

Nor, likewise, does 1986 hold out any other prospect than further barbarism in the field (by both sides, including by freelance hoodlums, Sinhalese and Tamil), and deeper bankruptcy of the 'Sri Lankan' exchequer; nothing other than the spread of the conflict, and its blood-letting, to hitherto relatively untouched areas of 'Sri Lanka', the up-country estates among them. Moreover, this is now a politically and economically ransacked society, pursuing a holy Buddhist war with an enemy which refuses to be defeated. And what is the enemy? Is it 'international subversion'? Is it the dark shadow of pan-Tamil nationalism, or Hindu racism? No, it is nothing more, nor less, than the claims of the Tamil minority population to physical security and democratic political entitlements on the island. It is to defeat these claims that the bankrupt state (or what is left of it) has armed to the teeth; and will be compelled to spend Rs.16.3 billion, in 1986, *on debt-servicing alone*, as inflation worsens and the economic difficulties of the people – Sinhalese and Tamil alike – deepen.

Instead of a just and judicious accommodation of Tamil demands, the chillingly Orwellian state-rhetoric of 'flushing out' and 'mopping up' 'terrorists' – euphemisms, in most cases, for the cold-blooded state-massacre of civilians – has become Colombo's political hallmark. But then with a *daily* military expenditure now of some 18 million rupees, truth itself must become a base metal. Yet the Finance Minister has declared that 'Sri Lanka' 'faces disaster if the ethnic conflict continues'. Indeed, 'Sri Lanka's' revenue is 'insufficient even to meet current expenditure', while 'almost all our capital expenditure has to be met by foreign aid and loans', as de Mel himself has admitted.

Whistling in the dark, President Jayawardene, with his own time surely running out, has in consequence again been driven to promise, in the name of 'national salvation', 'one more year', until victory over 'terrorism' is gained, while at the same time trying to associate Mrs. Bandaranaike in a cross-party crusade against the Tamil movement. But it is Rajiv Gandhi's support for Jayawardene, and the former's real hostility to Eelam – shared by his late mother – which is encouraging Jayawardene not to political settlement, but to further violent folly. Indeed, those Tamils who continue to harbour naive illusions about Delhi's intentions should note that Rajiv Gandhi, no friend to Tamil aspiration, openly declared to Jayawardene in 1985 that 'we are with you in your struggle'.

Yet Jayawardene's 'one more year' is itself a useless and empty 'promise', as his Sinhalese audience itself surely knows. For the 'traditional victory over our enemies', for which Athulathmudali, the Minister of National Insecurity, has called (through one side of his mouth) is further away than ever, as the political and military chaos worsens. Instead, a still higher price in sorrow and hardship than has already been paid in 1985 will be paid in 1986 for the gangsterism in Colombo. It is a gangsterism which is bleeding the people to death, one way or another; and bleeding to death Sinhalese and Tamil together.

The Prospects For Peace — *continued*

cataclysm. Will we reach such a point of no return?

Our answer to the question of peace is partly answered in what we have already stated. There are other factors that need to be taken into account. To expect the Tamils to be reconciled with those Sinhalese racists who have injured their dignity is as difficult as asking the Israelis to forgive the Nazis. The crimes are just as serious. The question however is one of tactic. Will a ceaseless ceasefire help? Will a temporary improvisation such as a single Tamil unit with a measure of devolution postpone the day of reckoning? Our view is that hatred has seeped deep into the body politic. In history, wars have been fought for long periods of time, sometimes for thirty years or for a hundred years. Sri Lanka's Tamils may have to learn to live with this fact even though a Vichy-style government could be set up in Jaffna. There have been such phenomena as irredentist (the demand for the return of stolen territory) movements in the recent past. The Tamils of Sri Lanka could well fall into this category. That is why we are in doubt that military solutions will provide any answer. If they did, we would never have had World War II. Nor for that matter would the Israelis have withdrawn from south Lebanon. The West Bank would have ceased to be the festering sore that it is.

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Letters To The Editor

ACROSS THE BORDERS

Sir,

THREE recent events have a direct connection with the destiny of the people of Tamil Eelam. One is regional, the second local and the third historical.

The idea of federal or confederal Governments coming into being on a regional basis has now taken its first step insofar as the seven South Asian countries are concerned. On the 8th December, the seven South Asian countries including India and Sri Lanka formed the SAARC, the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation.

Speaking on the occasion, the Sri Lankan President, Mr. Jayawardene, is reported to have declared that the six other countries of the region are prepared and willing to abide by whatever decisions India takes. In other words, India leads, the others follow. In this background, we Tamils must create the necessary momentum for the solution of the Tamil Eelam crisis by openly declaring that we too are keen to join India in a political link-up. To make this declaration, it is not essential that there should be in the first place a Tamil Eelam Nation State.

The other event is the Anglo-Irish Agreement. For the first time in the history of international Agreements, a precedent has been created in that a foreign Government is legally permitted to have a say in the affairs of one's own Government. The Anglo-Irish Agreement provides a role for the Irish Government in the affairs of Northern Ireland. What is more, this Agreement is now registered with the United Nations, thus giving it sanctity and the force of international law. Tamils can profit from this precedent by persuading India to upgrade its continuing negotiations with the Sri Lankan Government, by eventually entering into an Indo-Sri Lankan agreement giving Delhi (and possibly Madras also) a role and a say in the affairs of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka. Everyone knows to what extent both Delhi and Madras are already involved in our affairs. What is proposed here is merely to put them in some legal form. This is being advanced ***in the absence of any other viable solution to the crisis.***

The other event referred to is the commemoration of Arumuga Navalar Day recently in London. Navalar was the first Tamil freedom fighter and, although born in Jaffna, he spent more years of his life in Tamil Nadu. Navalar School in Chidambaram is still flourishing, like the one he established in Jaffna. His contribution to the Tamil language is monumental. His greatest single legacy for us is his life's mission which looked upon the whole Tamil world as one Nadu, one single State.

The Seven Nation Summit, the Agreement between the British and Irish Governments, and the great vision of Navalar – all these point only one way (as far as Tamils are concerned) and that is we must take immediate steps towards an Indo-Tamil Eelam political link-up. The first step is for all Tamil political leaders and activists to make a public declaration in support.

K. Vaikunthavasan

Tamils denied drugs

A consignment of vital drugs valued at over a lakh of rupees is reported to be idling at Anuradhapura. These drugs, which include A.T. injections, bandages, plasters etc. are meant for base hospitals and 42 dispensaries in the Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Mannar districts. These drugs are reported to have arrived at the Anuradhapura railway station by goods train in September but are idling for over three months while the patients in the above districts are suffering *(The Island – 17/12)*

THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARALLEL

Sir,

A FURORE is sought to be created over remarks made by Mr. John Howard, the Leader of the Opposition in the Australian Parliament comparing Sri Lanka to South Africa. Before this could die down, another leader of international eminence, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, has done the same thing by putting Sri Lanka and South Africa on the same plane, in a speech to the Lok Sabha recently. Responsible leaders like Howard and Gandhi weigh every word of what they say in public, especially when it is not complimentary of another country. Their words, therefore, cannot be far from the truth.

But in my opinion such comparison is only an understatement of reality. No doubt there is discrimination in South Africa but definitely less death and destruction than in Sri Lanka. For example, the Blacks cannot sit in the park benches reserved for whites but only in those reserved for blacks. There are other forms of discrimination too. But in Sri Lanka the Sinhalese and Tamils are supposed to be equal before the law but killing goes on merrily on a daily basis. I do not think that the number of blacks killed in South Africa which is a vast country can in any way approach the figures in Sri Lanka, the little Island of ours.

My humble opinion is that under present circumstances Sri Lanka can be compared to only one other country i.e. Nazi Germany of Hitler and Goebbels who murdered people only because they were Jews. Can anyone say that such a situation does not exist in Sri Lanka where racist killing is the order of the day? If Sri Lanka does not improve her much-tarnished image quickly, I am afraid more world leaders are going to say in public what they have been feeling privately all these days.

R. L. Thevathasan

DRUGS AND DEBAUCHERY IN SRI LANKA

A BUILDING contractor is working by floodlight in a drive to open Colombo's first strip-tease hotel and bring the city nearer becoming one of Asia's top sex capitals to rival Bangkok. Sri Lanka traditionally has been sold to foreign visitors as a paradise island, with dusky village maidens smiling out of glossy brochures. Today the focus is on boys as well as girls – indeed, Colombo's known male prostitute population far exceeds females.

With cheap drugs and high society gambling too, the city is heavily advertised in European travel magazines offering package sex tours. The preoccupation of the police with Tamil militancy and lax prostitution laws have meant little opposition to the trend, which has boosted the inflow and use of drugs such as LSD, heroin and cocaine. The country is now a key transit point for narcotics flowing from producing countries to European and American consumers. With normal drug trafficking routes disrupted by the war in Afghanistan, most narcotics from Afghanistan and Pakistan reach the West via Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan drug squad detectives say some 600 kg (1,350 lb) of cannabis alone reach the United States annually from the Indian Ocean island. Large consignments of heroin, cocaine and cannabis have been intercepted in the Port of Colombo over the past few years.

But Colombo's new boom industry is sex. In a tourist resort area about 25 km south of the city, police found that one in every six hotel employees was a male prostitute. Sociologists estimate the island has around 15,000 male prostitutes; police records say there are 1,500 in Colombo alone. Police investigating the murder of an elderly Briton discovered the existence of a homosexual society formed in England for men past retirement age. At least 30 were living in Sri Lanka on permanent residence visas. Complaints about the men's activities are seldom investigated, since the foreigners buy off the police or any complainant.

An international homosexual guidebook, "Spartacus", published in West Germany, described Sri Lanka as a "Gay Paradise" and listed street names, locations and telephone numbers for homosexual contacts.

Health authorities in Colombo, which has a population of 500,000 fear an outbreak of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Some 16,000 people a month currently seek treatment in government and private hospitals for sexually-transmitted diseases, including an advanced strain of genital herpes. An investigation by the weekend "Sun" newspaper revealed that top fashion models, high society married women, schoolboys and rugby players were "on call 24 hours" in many of Colombo's top tourist hotels. Male and female prostitutes were graded to cost from SL RS.100 to SL RS.3,000 ($3.75 to $110). The newspapers claimed six high class gambling clubs employed waiters and waitresses who became available for paid sex after midnight.

Police deputy inspector-general Heema Weerasinghe said the police department was not to blame for the situation. "We have very limited resources, and most of our men are busy investigating more serious crime," he said. "Our inquiries into petty crimes are superficial because only a very limited number of persons are available for routine crime and vice investigation, and they have far too many cases to handle."

Prostitution has traditionally been a minor offence in Sri Lanka – punished with short jail terms, small fines or simply warnings. Police usually charge suspects under the "wrongful gain" section of the Sri Lankan penal code which gives magistrates no choice but to treat defendants leniently.

Last year the authorities authorised the death penalty and life imprisonment for persons convicted of possessing large amounts of narcotics, but neither sentence has yet been imposed.

– Courtesy Compass News Features

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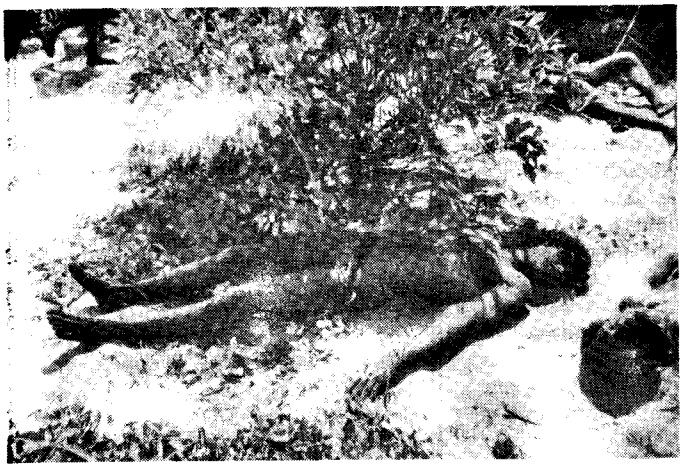
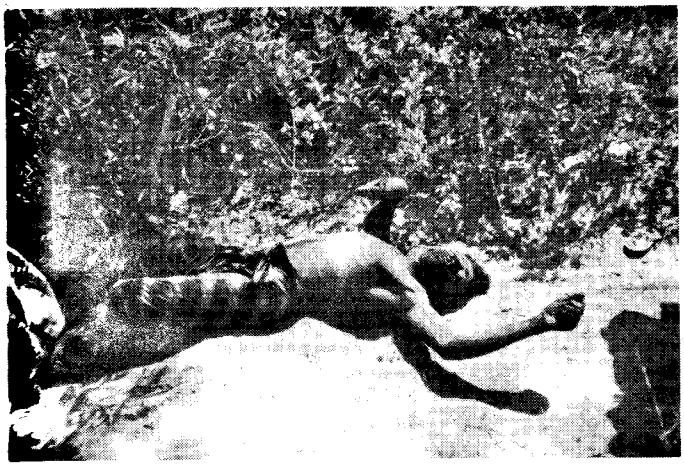
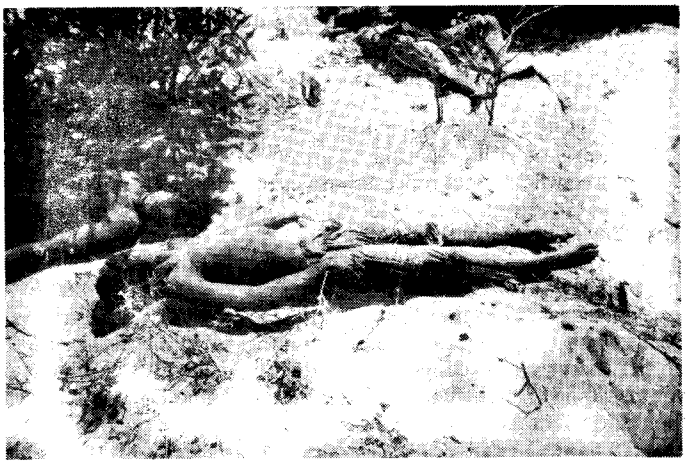


SRI LANKAN STATE MASSACRE AT MURUGAPURI

(Report: Tamil Times, November 1985, Page 17)

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TRADITIONAL HOMELANDS *Continued from Page 10*

Rather, things begin the other way around – with a conclusion more or less vaguely formed, for which reasons are found later. Each side rationalizes its own beliefs, however tenuous and unreasonable they might be, confident that events will prove them right.

But this is a totally unconstructive attitude because more than anything else both sides need to compromise – a solution that is unfair to one side will be resented and will eventually be undermined by that side.

It was the harsh treatment of Germany by the victorious Allies at the conclusion of the First World War that paved the way for Hitler and the Second World War. This is an absolutely vital point that the Tamils must realize, as much as the Sinhalese.

A mutually acceptable compromise on the "homelands" question could be to acknowledge both the present political need of the Tamils to preserve their numerical preponderance in the Northern and Eastern provinces, and the existence of land hunger in other parts of the country.

A practical policy would be to structure the colonization of the two provinces for, say, the next 25 years on the basis of the existing population ratios in the respective provinces. After that agreed upon period elapses, the land colonization policy should be restructured by a joint Central and provincial government-sponsored commission.

There is a sense in which the three Tamil demands examined above are primarily rhetorical and propagandist. The three demands may be conceded on paper by the government but with little tangible gains to the Tamils were it to be accompanied by a larger army presence rather than by a real sharing of power.

To give an example, the Palestinians remain stateless even though a great majority of countries officially recognize them to be a nation with the rights to self-determination and a country.

Whatever the Sinhalese "National Front" and its leadership may say, there can be no military solution to Tamil guerilla warfare – an authority no less than the present army commander Nalin Seneviratne has said so. But political solutions have contained both guerilla activities and terrorism to the extent, at least, of preserving national unity.

Contrary to popular and stubbornly uninformed opinion, federalism has nowhere led to separation; but counter-terrorist operations, which degenerated into state terrorism, had led to separation.

There are a variety of ways in which power may be distributed out from the centre to regional minorities. Federalism, which is the commonly employed form, is a political mechanism that has as its primary focus the reconciliation of national unity with the maintenance of regional and minority rights.

In a federal system the powers of the central government are limited in regard to certain agreed upon categories such as education, land settlement and police powers. Some powers are kept by the central government, while others are shared by the two levels of government or given in full to the provincial governments. This is neither separation nor a first step to it.

Where, as in Sri Lanka, ethnic groups are territorially intermixed, reduction in conflict at the national level may be obtained by the creation of federal states (or provinces) with a mixed population.

When ethnic proportions vary over the country, a group that is a minority at the centre may be a majority in one or more states as the Tamils are in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. They will be in a position to determine policies in these provinces which should mitigate whatever resentment their small influence, or even exclusion, from the centre causes them.

DON'T MAKE TAMILS HOSTAGES

DON'T send back to Sri Lanka the Tamil youths who have sought asylum in Switzerland, until the ethnic problem is settled.

This was the urgent plea made by a delegation of the Jaffna Citizens' Committee when it met representatives of the Swiss Government at Hotel Ashok on Thursday (19th December).

The Citizens' Committee delegation also told the Swiss representatives that the idea of transferring the Tamil youths in Switzerland to special camps in the South of Sri Lanka was dangerous as these youths would virtually become hostages to the tender mercies of the Sri Lankan Government.

A delegation of the Jaffna Mothers' Front also met the Swiss representatives and handed over a memorandum.

Amnesty International has already appealed to the Swiss Government not to send back the Lankan Tamil youths as they would be subject to reprisals.

The Swiss representatives visited some refugee camps during their two-day stay in Jaffna.

The two Swiss representatives who visited Jaffna, accompanied by Mr. Kaufmann, acting Charge de Affaires of the Swiss Embassy, were Dr. S. Werenfels and Dr. M. Zuchschwerdt.

West London Tamil School Christmas Party

One hundred and fifty pupils, their 24 teachers and parents, most of them Hindus, joined in carol singing led by Packiam Perinparaja and his wife Punitham. Rev. Swaminathan Jacob, Area Secretary for Asia and the Pacific of the Methodist Church Overseas Division, spoke on the significance of Christmas. Mr. Anthony Rampton of the Hilden Charitable Trust, one of whose principal interests is the welfare of the ethnic minorities, spoke of the importance of mother tongue teaching. He emphasised the importance of language in preserving the identity of a minority. ***"The first endeavours of the majority community are always directed at suppressing the language of the minority"*** *he said. Mr. Rampton concluded by expressing his sympathy with Tamils in Britain in their concern for their unfortunate compatriots in Sri Lanka and condemned the recent UK Government decision to impose visa requirements on Tamil refugees.*

Among others who spoke were Mr. Harry Greenway, MP for North Ealing and Mr. Michael Elliott, MEP for West London. All the children were given Christmas gifts and special awards were made to Shenika Shakespeare and Lakshmi Ganeson for their dazzling performance at their respective Arangethrams, and to Jeevan Manickavasagan for winning the Borough of Ealing Community Languages Association essay competition.

April Election Planned

There is growing speculation in Sri Lanka that President Jayawardene is planning a snap election around April.

Analysts say the granting of a pardon to the opposition leader Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike on Wednesday was the first indication. Her civic rights were taken away in 1980 after she was found guilty of abuse of power during her term of office as Prime Minister from 1970 to 1977.

Press reports said that the pardon came as India pressed Sri Lanka to consider proposals by the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front to resolve the island's ethnic crisis.

It wants amalgamation of the northern and eastern provinces and for them to be given autonomy. The Government refuses to consider this saying that Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims live in almost equal numbers in the eastern province.

An election will not affect the position of President Jayawardene, who was re-elected in 1982 to serve till 1990.

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Continued from page 11

chauvinism, federal form of government, entrenchment of fundamental rights and their enforcement through an independent judiciary, bicameral legislature, rule of law etc. It is not necessary to discuss here the various steps taken by successive Indian governments to solve the internal aspects of India's national question from the setting up of the States Reorganisation by Nehru to the resolution of the Punjab problem by Rajiv Gandhi. Unlike the Soulbury Constitution and the two Republican Constitutions of Sri Lanka, the Indian Constitution was drafted, enacted and adopted with democratic consensus. Incidentally, the principle of the right of self-determination is not alien to Western political tradition. Additional 'precedents' may yet emanate if Tom Nairn's sensational theses are proved right and if there is a further 'break-up of Britain'.

A TRAGEDY

In discussing the so-called East European political tradition, Jehan Perera has turned Lenin's theory of nationalism on its head. Perera speaks of "a tradition in which a nation is not seen politically as such . . .". If one is speaking of a tradition one has to include the professed principles as well as the practice of honouring them even if it be in the breach. Trotsky hailed Lenin's legacy on the national question as one of the eternal treasures of mankind. It is a tragedy that his principles are being reneged by the so-called Marxist States, while the so-called non-Marxist States are throwing away the (nationalist) baby with the (Marxist) bath water. Lenin never countenanced eternal nationalism as such. But in this epoch of nation-states, equality of nations under a single state would be without any meaning if these nations do not have the freedom to secede. This does not mean that each and every nation should secede and set up its own state or the right of self-determination could only exist on paper and in reality be nothing more than the proverbial right of every man to eat from a golden plate. Without complete and meaningful equality the (Tamil) people belonging to the nation cannot cultivate any sense of belonging to the (Sri Lanka) State with which their nation got tied up, for whatever reason, or to the (island) country which they share with other (Sinhala) nations.

TRADITIONAL HOMELANDS

The question of traditional homelands is long past the stage of being an arena for scoring points. It's not the seemingly insatiable land hunger of the Sinhalese masses that the Tamils are fighting against. Oh, where and on which side of the great divide were these great Sinhala patriots, when those in the Sama Samajist tradition fought for land reform from 1935 and gave it a legal shape, first during the fifties and later in the seventies? Those who opposed it first, those who circumvented it later and those who now have their lands restored, are all demanding that the innocent Sinhalese villager be given a shot gun and be sent to a no-man's land to prevent the borders from reaching Colombo!

A combination of anti-Tamil polities and the vested interests of commission agents and their beneficiaries has always characterised Sri Lanka's expensive and badly-managed colonisation schemes, more often than not undertaken with foreign aid, from the 1930's up till the present Mahaweli plan. It is sheer hypocrisy to interpret the question of traditional homelands as a matter of conflicting demands for historical rights between the Tamil-speaking people and the Sinhalese en masse. It is even worse hypocrisy to suggest that "Sri Lanka is a democracy belonging to the Western tradition" and hence the unacceptability of the Tamilian demands in their current form. Sri Lanka ceased to be a democracy, **by its own past standards,** even before July 1983. When Indira Gandhi imposed her notorious emergency rule in India, the universal indignation that greeted it was mobilised by the 'free press' in India and the Indian intelligentsia within and outside the country. Even in Sri Lanka the leading light of the UNP warned the country to beware of "the cow and the calf precedent". But today, the Colombo media and the bulk of the Sinhalese intelligentsia are rallying behind the UNP Government, in the name of fighting the Tamils, despite the Government's crippling blows to the island's democracy.

It is to this aspect of Sri Lanka's contemporary crisis that the liberals, democrats and the leftists among the Sinhalese should address their minds and precipitate political action rather than resorting to journalistic hectoring towards the battered Tamils fighting for survival.

Courtesy of Saturday Review

India at Antarctica

The 87 member, fifth Indian scientific expedition to Antarctica sailed aboard the Swedish ice-breaker, Thuleland, from Mormugao harbour recently on a four-month assignment.

Mr. M.K. Kaul, head of the team and glaciologist from the Geological Survey of India, was confident that the mission would be a success.

The expedition includes 24 scientists drawn from 13 disciplines. A total of 61 servicemen have joined the expedition.

Of the 87, nine members are repeating their voyage to Antarctica. They include Mr. Kaul, Dr. Miss Aditi Pant and Dr. V.K. Dhargalkar, who is deputy leader of the wintering team. Another woman member of the team is Miss Gowri Indersen.

Besides continuing the scientific programmes initiated by the previous four expeditions, the emphasis this time will be on diversifying the activities and concentrating attention more towards areas in the interior.

OUR POLITICAL DILEMMA

TIMIDITY and tentative actions cripple every aspect of life in Jaffna today. The electric light flickers and falters. So does every other public facility. The train service to Colombo has stopped now.

Development in the North is at a standstill. Farmers have not had their quota of potato seeds this year. Nature too has been cruel. The fortnight of downpour has severely damaged the paddy fields.

There is a slow erosion of parental interest in educating their children in the North. Parents who in the wake of the 1983 July riots transferred their children to schools in Jaffna are now having second thoughts. As to higher education, Indian Universities now appear to be the Mecca and Medina of the Jaffna parent. Attendance at schools, even in areas unaffected by any violent activity, is generally low.

Will the large number of boys of school-going age in Jaffna, who now are employed as conductors in mini-buses and attendants at petrol pumps, ever have a chance to resume their education? What will be the ultimate effect on the future of the community of such a situation?

Public concern for the plight and safety of the civilians emerges now and then, but it soon dies down for fear of collateral effects and the lack of the necessary organisational infrastructure strong enough to do anything meaningful. Political groups, instead of exploring avenues of agreement, appear to irrationally demonstrate a tendency for serious cleavages.

Normalcy will continue to be a dream if violation of a citizen's freedom cannot be challenged in a court of law. Violence has become the rhetoric of the period.

Very apt in our land now is the truth eloquently expressed by Prof. John C. Bennett –

> "Without order, especially in a complicated modern society, there can be no justice or freedom. Without a measure of freedom, no system of order can long be endured for it becomes a hateful tyranny".

(Abridged from "Morning Star", Jaffna, Sri Lanka)

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SRI LANKA'S INDEPENDENT CONSTITUTIONS & THE PLIGHT OF THE MINORITY TAMILS

By Augustine Saverimuttu

CEYLON (now Sri Lanka) obtained her Independence from Colonial rule in 1948. Ceylon became a Dominion under the British Commonwealth. Independent Ceylon first functioned under the Soulbury Constitution whose chief architect was Lord Soulbury who was the Chairman of the Royal Commission appointed to look into the question of granting Independence to Ceylon.

The Soulbury Constitution had certain entrenched clauses for protecting minority rights. Notwithstanding, there was clear proof of minority rights being eroded and even violated on very many occasions, by the majority Sinhalese governments.

In 1970 when Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the newly-elected Head of the Sinhalese government she decided to make Ceylon a Republic within the Commonwealth and do away with the Soulbury Constitution and draft a new Republican Constitution. The new Republican Constitution came into effect in May, 1972. Under the Republican Constitution Ceylon became known as Sri Lanka.

The present Jayawardene government which came into power in 1977 drafted another new Constitution for Sri Lanka which became operative in 1978. **The net result of all this was that the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka became a disillusioned and discriminated lot.**

The agitation by the then Tamil leaders for a separate State to be carved out for the Tamil minority comprising the Northern and Eastern provinces which have been the traditional homelands of the Tamils of Sri Lanka for generations was born out of a feeling that the Tamils had always been discriminated against by successive Sinhalese majority governments that ruled Sri Lanka since Independence.

The racial riots of 1958, and more lately those of August, 1977, and the still recent one of July, 1983, when the Tamil minority residents in the capital city of Colombo and other Sinhalese areas suffered heavy damage to life and property had only intensified this agitation. And now the militant youth among the Tamils appear to have reached a point of no retreat from the demand for a separate State. This is no doubt an unfortunate situation.

Certain enlightened sections among the minority community had expressed the view that while the Indian Constitution took over three years to draft, Sri Lanka's present Constitution was drafted within a matter of days. The Constituent Assembly that drafted the Indian Constitution, they said, was deliberately made an "India in microcosm" ensuring that even the small minorities were well represented and **major issues were all decided by the characteristic Indian concepts of consensus and accommodation. That is perhaps why the Indian Constitution has remained stable and almost unaltered since India obtained her Independence in 1947.**

In the case of Sri Lanka's present Constitution, they were of the view that apart from the haste in which it was done there was also an element of secrecy in drafting the Constitution thereby denying the people the freedom of discussion which is a basic democratic right. It was their contention that any worthwhile settlement should be by dialogue and consensus and not by a majority vote in parliament. **Wise and sober judgments come out of the interplay of balanced and varied opinions.**

Some of them had even expressed the view that the new Constitution, apart from failing to fulfil the aspirations of the Tamil minority, was a dangerous experiment in that the removal of the President from office involved a cumbersome procedure which in practice might be well nigh impossible. That is, that if the holder of the office of President was a corrupt person or one with dictatorial tendencies, then the slips in the Constitution would begin to show.

Leave that as it may, but it must be remembered that **Constitutions as stated by a Constitutional expert, are designed by governments to protect the rights of the minorities.** It is for this purpose that a government exists. But few governments realise this fact as a solemn duty imposed on them. Power very often is the supreme temptation with which the elect are lured to failure. Not only the Tamils but even others holding an unbiased and enlightened opinion are of the view that Sri Lanka's present Constitution has only provided measly concessions for the Tamils.

As stated earlier, governments exist to safeguard the interests of the minorities. The present government in Sri Lanka cannot be unaware of this fact. The present Constitution had been framed in such a hurried and haphazard manner that adequate safeguards had not been provided to protect minority interests. And within the short time of the Constitution coming into existence several amendments to the Constitution had to be enacted. And how many more amendments will be enacted in the future is of course anybody's guess! This nevertheless is not a healthy practice especially in a democracy.

States, like men, have their growth, their manhood, their decreptitude and their decay. But national injustice (by which I mean injustice to a section of the nation) is the surest way to national downfall. Neither chauvinistic patriotism nor linguistic fanaticism should blind us to justice and reason. If the language question is not satisfactorily solved, Sri Lanka may one day find itself in a major linguistic crisis. That crisis has already started. **Language is always an issue that raises passions for political purposes.**

It would be worthwhile to recall what the late Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India had to say about language intolerance in India. He said, "Let us say that language is a delicate plant. But a plant does not grow by pulling out other plants. It grows on its own vitality." The crisis at present in Sri Lanka is not merely a language crisis. That is long past. It has developed into an ethnic crisis. And a major one at that.

Political institutions are a superstructure resting on an economic foundation. And this economic foundation which is so vital to the stability of any political superstructure can never remain sound if a section of the people are discontented and therefore uncooperative.

Independence by itself does not change the world. Whether Sri Lanka is an Independent Dominion or Republic will bring about no significant change until and unless the right political atmosphere is created for a real effort of national regeneration. Constitutions will not provide all the economic and social tools that are needed to effect this national regeneration. Even evidence of good intentions will not do. They must be driven in with the hammer of determination.

There can be no national happiness when a section of the people are discontented and unhappy. **There can be no national progress if the minorities are uncooperative or lack enthusiasm. It is only when every citizen feels that he can live with self-respect and assert his rights in the land of his birth that there can be true national progress and prosperity.**

It must not be forgotten that the essence of all successful negotiations is compromise. And this compromise must come from both sides; the majority side and the minority side. Our willingness to solve a problem can be to compromise.

If only a real endeavour is made to find an answer to the minority problem in Sri Lanka there is no reason why an answer cannot be found and the problem be allowed to remain as a festering sore on the fair face of Sri Lanka. While the initiative must come from the government

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side the minority leaders must respond with a sincere willingness to come to terms with the government on a paramount matter of this nature. After all the minority problem in Sri Lanka is a national problem. And there is always a national answer to every national problem. The answer must be sought in a spirit of mutual trust, friendship, understanding and goodwill.

Disagreement is the essence of debate. Patience, persistence and persuasion should ultimately win. The future may be bleak for the Tamils in Sri Lanka and the struggle may be hard. But strength and firmness and the will to win not so much by defiance or violence but wherever possible by tolerance and tact, may eventually yield the desired results.

The Tamils in Sri Lanka are today a leaderless race. Their position is akin to a rudderless ship tossed about perilously on the uncharted seas of violence, anxiety, uncertainty and despair.

A Constitution in the last analysis is organised opinion. And where there is little or no public opinion a Constitution cannot be deemed as valid. What comes from the operation of such a Constitution is bad government which sooner or later may become dictatorial government.

In the present context of things in Sri Lanka it has become both imperative and inevitable for the Tamils to fight for their rights. But the battle is better fought in a non-violent and dignified manner. Hostility and aggressive resistance will invariably end in a way the aggressors neither planned nor expected. There is martyrdom of the Tamils that started as far back as 1958 that is still going on in a more violent form.

Whatever trials and tests Sri Lanka may have to face in the future the country's ultimate strength lies not in oppression, not in smug complacency, not in her resources or wealth, but in the unity of her people. For men may come and men may go but the nation must go on for ever.

And until justice is blind to race and religion, until it is unconcerned with the language one speaks, Sri Lanka's lately won freedom will only be a proclamation and not a fact. To the extent that this proclamation of her freedom lies unfulfilled, to that extent will her leaders have fallen short of assuring freedom to the free.

Scholarly Administrator

DEVANESAN NESIAH has been invited by Harvard University, USA to research into the subject of "Preferential Policies in Divided Societies". As an officer of the Sri Lanka Administrative Services, Mr. Nesiah once was Government Agent of Jaffna. He just completed his MA thesis on "Public Administration" at the Kennedy School of Government. Now, in addition to research, he will also hold the appointment of Teaching Fellow and assist Professor Thomas Shelling.

SEASONAL MESSAGE

from Shelton de Silva, Methodist Church, Kollupitiya, Sri Lanka

In May, when I was in England for the British Methodist Conference, I attended the thirteenth anniversary service of the London Tamil Congregation. As I had just arrived from Sri Lanka and the Putney Methodist Church was full of Sri Lankan Tamils, some of whom had emigrated owing to the national problem, I was asked to give them the greetings of the Sri Lankan Methodist Conference.

What dare I tell these Sri Lankan born Tamil Christians, who were yearning to go back to the land they loved? What could I say to a hurt community that could contribute a little to that hurt being healed?

With the preface that they might find my words difficult to believe, I said, "I want to assure you that there are Sinhalese Christians in Sri Lanka who love you and are praying that peace will be restored between our two communities. I want to assure you that we care and we continually remember you in our prayers".

Rev. S. M. Jacob, minister of the London Tamil Congregation, wanted a silver plated chalice from Sri Lanka and offered to pay for it. I thought that it should be a gift subscribed to by the Sinhalese Christians. The chalice was inscribed "For He is our Peace".

The gift of a chalice is a very significant token. When we eat of that bread and drink of that cup we proclaim the Lord's death till he comes. In bombed Coventry Cathedral which the Nazis partly destroyed, is a stained glass window with the legend, "Father forgive". This is not a plea that the Nazis be forgiven their dastardly deeds, but that all concerned forgive each other and ask for forgiveness from each other. We too need to pray that same prayer if He is to be our peace and we are to proclaim the Lord's birth and His death till He comes in our day in our land.

Rev. Shelton de Silva is also an active member of the Civil Rights Movement in Sri Lanka.

Mr. V. SIVA SUBRAMANIAM

Bernard Shaw once said that there are great men who are great among small men and there are great men who are great among great men. Mr. V. Siva Subramaniam, retired (Sri Lankan) Supreme Court Judge who passed away on 5.12.85, belonged to the latter group. He has left us at a time when we could ill afford to lose him. Sri Lanka has lost a distinguished citizen and the country is poorer by his death. His was not merely a successful life but a distinguished and remarkable one.

He began life like most boys from Jaffna with only intelligence and industry as the main assets. Success followed him in school, in professional studies, at the Bar, on the Bench and in public service. He made his way to some of the highest positions in the land through sheer merit.

He joined the Judicial Service in 1941; in 1962 he was appointed Commissioner of Assize. In 1966 he was appointed a Justice to the Supreme Court, from which office he retired in 1970.

On his retirement he was not content to enjoy the leisure he had so well earned. He willingly gave his services in the cause of the betterment of his fellow beings. He took a keen interest in religious and educational activities.

Mr. Siva Subramaniam was a devout Hindu steeped in the work and teachings of saints, sages and the Bhagavad Gita. His knowledge of Saivaism and mastery of Hindu philosophy were clear and manifest in his spoken and written word. The Hindus of Sri Lanka will ever remain grateful for the remarkable contribution and selfless service rendered by him for the revival, promotion and development of Hinduism.

He adorned many high public offices with distinction and honour. He was generous to the core. Such was Siva Subramaniam, a man of intellect and heart – a beautifully rounded personality.

C. M.

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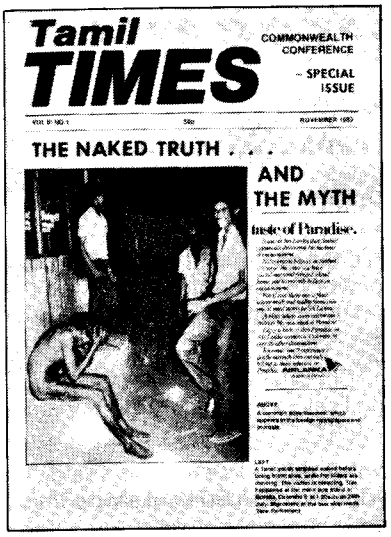

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OVERSEAS TAMILS ASSOCIATION – MADRAS (Cultural Centre & Housing Complex)

Justice A. Sivanandan (Retd. Puisne Judge, Zambia), Convenor of the OTA would be glad to hear from overseas Tamils interested in joining/supporting the work of the Association. Among its objectives are

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Brother seeks bridegroom in late 30's for sister permanently settled and working in the U.K. Religion and caste immaterial. Box M73 c/o Tamil Times.

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Jaffna Tamil Hindu parents, well-connected with attractive daughter, only child 26 years, British qualified doctor, living and working in London with permanent right of residence, seek a professionally qualified bridegroom under 33 from U.K., Sri Lanka or elsewhere. Please send full details with photograph, if possible. Box M75, c/o Tamil Times.

Mother seeks partner for daughter, age 27, working student and willing to settle abroad. Mars 7th House. Box M76, c/o Tamil Times.

Family seeks bride for professional son settled in Australia, age 34 years. Box M77, c/o Tamil Times.

OBITUARIES

WALTON. The death occurred on 12 January of W. Arasoe Walton, retired District Judge in his home at Aseervatham Lane, Jaffna. He was predeceased by his wife Kamala (neé Bartlett) in 1983. He leaves behind an only daughter Suvendrani, wife of Dr. J. P. Manickasingam of Peterborough.

RATNARAJAH. The death occurred recently of A.D.R. Ratnarajah, Deputy Conservator of Forests. He is survived by his wife Thiraviamalar (daughter of Mr. & Mrs. S.K. Thiravianayagam of Chavakachcheri) and three sons.

THURAIRATNAM, A. Formerly Sales Manager, Bata Shoe Company, Colombo, son of late Mr. & Mrs. Arumainayagam, husband of Kanmani, father of Logan, Dushi, and Chuti, passed away in Madras and remains interred in Madras.

V.S. NADARAJAN. Attorney-at-law, retired Deputy Registrar of Companies, husband of Kamala (neé Gulasekharam), father of Ranjini (Australia) Rohini (Maldives) and Shantakumor 31/4, Sea Avenue, Colombo 3.

MAHALINGAM, V.K. Retd. Asst. Supt., Telecom, Colombo. Died Jan 17. 76 years. Father of Dr. M. Satchi, M.D. (13 Fir Dr., Danbury, CT 06810, USA) and Pathmajothi Kathiravel (Toronto).

RAJENDRAM, M. Retd. Headmaster, Thondamanaru High School (founded by his grandfather Veeragathipillai, distinguished business magnate and philanthropist) died at the age of 78 years.

CWC PROTESTS AGAINST DY. MINISTER'S STATEMENT

The General Secretary of the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), Mr. M. Sellasamy, has protested to President Jayawardene against statements made by Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs and Teaching Hospitals, Mr. Punchi Nilame.

In the memorandum, the CWC drew the President's attention to Mr. Punchi Nilame's statement alleging that only one per cent of the Tamils in Sri Lanka were not with the 'terrorists'.

Mr. Punchi Nilame wanted an all out war against terrorism and terrorists. Does it mean that the war must be carried out against 99 per cent of Tamils in the country, asked the CWC.

The memorandum pointed out that it was well to remember that attitudes such as those of Mr. Punchi Nilame would drive more Tamils into the ranks of the political extremists and militants. The Ceylon Workers Congress could not be a party to a war against 99 per cent of the Tamils. The CWC on the other hand had explored every possible avenue towards smoothing the way for a political solution and will continue its efforts for unity and the peaceful co-existence of the several communities of this country, the memorandum added.

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THE SIKH PARALLEL

by Dr. R.W. Crossette Thambiah, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

THE SIKH party Akali Dal won the September 1985 elections in Punjab state, India. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi described it as a defeat for his party, Indira Congress, but a victory for democracy and Mother India. On the same occasion he asked the Sri Lankan leaders to take note of how democracy won in Punjab state.

Let us compare how the two ethnic minorities – the Sikhs in India and the Tamils in Sri Lanka have fared.

1. The Punjab state, which the Sikhs densely occupy, has its legislative assembly which is in full charge of the State except for matters of all India concern like foreign affairs and defence.

The Sri Lankan Tamils densely occupy the Northern and Eastern provinces; asked for nearly thirty years that they be allowed to manage their internal affairs like local government, land, education, health services and the like. Agreements were reached with both the major Sinhalese parties but not honoured.

2. The Sikhs demanded greater autonomy and the demand for separation, Khalistan, was taken up by a growing number of Sikh extremists. The Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, the holiest shrine of the Sikh religion, was used as a military base and it became necessary to clean it up by force. The Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, who ordered the military action was gunned down by her own Sikh body guards.

The Sri Lankan Tamil militants seeking to separate, gunned down no Prime Minister, in spite of the flower of their youth being gunned down culminating in the holocaust of July '83. Indeed the Tamil militants scrupulously avoided any attack on Sinhalese civilians in or out of their provinces, for a number of years after the opening of the undeclared war against them.

3. The assassination of the Hindu Prime Minister by her trusted Sikh body guards so enraged the Hindu community that innocent Sikhs were attacked, chiefly in Delhi. The new Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, the son of the slain Prime Minister visited the affected areas the next day and pleaded "This madness must stop". He ordered a judicial inquiry.

In Sri Lanka, the July '83 massacre was allowed to run for days before the Sri Lankan President spoke and even then expressed no sympathy to the affected Tamils. To this day no inquiry has been ordered, not even about the slaughter of 52 Tamil militant leaders while in government custody in the government's most secure jail.

4. The Indian Prime Minister had discussions with the Akali Dal party, one of whose demands was a capital city for themselves, instead of a shared capital with the neighbouring State.

In Sri Lanka the government has been unable for eight years to agree among themselves about the grant of any meaningful devolution of power to the Tamils of the North and Eastern provinces.

5. To ascertain whether the agreement reached with the Sikhs is acceptable to the people of the Punjab State, where a large number of Hindus also live, the Prime Minister of India orderd a general election in the Punjab State. He did not think it necessary to have a general election all over India. He felt it was the concern of only the people of the Punjab State to vote as to how they should be governed.

In Sri Lanka the government insists that any agreement with regard to how the Tamils grievances in the Northern and Eastern provinces are settled must be approved by all the provinces in Sri Lanka.

6. The people of Punjab have voted and even the Hindus who normally support Congress I party voted for Sikh Akali Dal party.

In the recent by-election in Mulkirigala in Sri Lanka the chief plank of the contesting Sinhalese parties was, who could eradicate Tamil "terrorism" more ruthlessly.

All the people of Punjab can now get together and work to develop the hitherto strife-torn State.

Rajiv Gandhi who loves democracy and Mother India is happy, though his party was defeated. He wants the Sri Lankan leaders to take a leaf from the Sikh experience of how a much more complicated ethnic minority problem in India was solved.

by courtesy of Lanka Guardian

PERSISTENT TORTURE

Amnesty International urged Sri Lanka urgently to stop torture by government forces. It called on President Jayawardene to establish an independent committee to investigate complaints of torture.

Amnesty issued its appeal after Sri Lanka rejected a report it published last October, File on Torture: Sri Lanka, *as "unfair, biased and untrue".*

In its October report Amnesty published sworn testimony describing widespread and persistent torture.

Methods of torture reported included hanging people upside down while beating them all over the body, prolonged beatings on the soles of the feet and other parts of the body and insertion of chilli powder in the nostrils, mouth, and eyes and on the genitals.

Amnesty then expressed its deep concern at the Government's failure to respond positively to reports of torture.

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followed by a Concert 6.30 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.

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Programme:

9.30 a.m.	—	*Registration and Coffee*
10.00 a.m.	—	*Mrs. Ann Dummett, Runnymede Trust on Major issues raised by Swann Report*
10.30 a.m.	—	*Mr. Safdar Alladina on "Mother Tongue Maintenance or Marginalization?"*
11.00 a.m.	—	*Dr. A.S. Sittampalam Ph.D., FIA, on "Job Opportunities for Tamils in U.K. in the 1990's"*
11.30 a.m.	—	*Discussion*
1.00 p.m.	—	*LUNCH (provided by Organisers)*
2.00 p.m.	—	*Workshop – formulation of Syllabus for language, music and dancing in Tamil Schools (U.K.)*
3.30 p.m.	—	*Close*

As only 150 places are available for the Conference, early registration is recommended.

6.30 p.m. — *Variety Entertainment*

ALL ARE WELCOME

For further details and Registration, please contact:

Dr. R. Niththyananthan, M.Sc., Ph.D., Headmaster, West London Tamil School,
179 Norval Road, North Wembley, Middlesex, HA0 3SX. Tel: 01 904 3937

CONFERENCE FUNDED BY GREATER LONDON COUNCIL

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CRISIS MONTH FOR SRI LANKA

Of all the bitter ethnic conflicts which divide the people of South Asia, none, perhaps, seems so intractable as the rift between Sri Lanka's Sinhalese and Tamil communities. For the last two years the island has existed on the brink of civil war whilst the indisciplined armed forces of the State and the equally merciless Tamil terrorists have indiscriminately attacked innocent civilians. More than a thousand people have lost their lives. Sri Lanka's famed serendipity has been reduced to mayhem and carnage.

Hope for a solution surfaced six months ago when peace talks sponsored by Rajiv Gandhi's Indian government offered the possibiity of a resolution between the Tamil demands for a separate country, Eelam, and the Sri Lankan government's determination to retain central control over the unitary political structure of the island. But now even that possibility is receding. Anxious efforts are presently under way in Colombo to prevent the talks collapsing altogether.

The problem goes back to the country's independence in 1948. Under British rule the Tamil community, which was enterprising and diligent, achieved considerable prominence in commercial and public life. After independence successive governments sought to promote the majority Sinhala community. The Tamils were made to feel discriminated, and over succeeding decades this slowly turned into alienation. In 1983 with the massacre of Tamils in the southern half of the island the links between its races snapped. Last year the Tamils demanded recognition of themselves as a separate nation and their province as a separate homeland. Since then the conflict has been unrelenting, with both sides seeking a military resolution of the rift.

Worried, however, by the manner in which Sri Lanka's conflict might reverberate through India's own southern Tamil population, Mr. Gandhi last summer offered to sponsor peace talks. The Indians promised to try to persuade the Tamils to give up their claim to Eelam and to accept a cease fire in return for a devolution of power by the government in Colombo. A ceasefire was agreed. The Tamils informally indicated their willingness to accept a negotiated settlement but the Sri Lankan government has been reluctant to offer suitable terms. In November, after a series of abortive talks, President Jayawardene proposed a measure of provincial autonomy. He offered the Tamils a provincial council under an elected chief minister with powers to control subjects such as health, primary education and civic maintenance.

In Tamil eyes, however, it was inadequate. They insisted upon two further conditions: the linking of the north and east of Sri Lanka into a single Tamil-speaking province and powers for the provincial council to control land settlement and law and order. As the Indians have made clear that they do not support the Tamil claim to the east, the real sticking point between the two sides is the issue of greater powers for the provincial council.

In theory this would suggest that a resolution of the conflict could be around the corner. In practice it is in fact as far away as it ever was. For what ought not to be an insurmountable hurdle seems unfortunately to have become one. President Jayawardene appears to be about to reject any enhancement of the proposed provincial powers. He believes that the island's Sinhala electorate would never accept such sharing of government with the Tamils. He claims that they would view it as a serious threat to their cherished identity. And the President, who is nearly eighty, seems to lack either the courage or the vision to rise above such sentiments in an act of national statesmanship.

After six months of effort Mr. Gandhi's advisers have let it be known that if the Sri Lankan Government rejects this primary condition for a peaceful settlement the Indians will call off the peace process. Already Mr. Gandhi has lost considerable support from India's forty million Tamils and faces growing opposition in his own Congress party for his policies. They view the restraints he has placed on the Tamil guerrilla groups in the hope of securing a deal as unjustified.

Yet if the peace process is called off the conflict in Sri Lanka between its bitterly-divided communities will rapidly grow. The island could easily succumb to civil war. People are already talking of a possible Lebanonization of the country. Despite Indian protestations to the contrary, Mr. Gandhi may find it impossible to stand by if Sri Lanka's Tamils are killed in increasing numbers. January 1986 may well prove to be the last opportunity to save Sri Lanka. The onus rests squarely on President Jayawardene's shoulders. *By courtesy of The Times (January 9, 1986)*

(In the history of recent editorial judgements in the British press on the Tamil issue this represents a significant and timely shift of opinion towards a correct understanding of the conflict in Sri Lanka. This is the kind of authorative opinion which must make it increasingly difficult for Colombo to propergate its brand of fiction in the world's media. Ed.)

Rights of Bandaranaike Restored in Sri Lanka

President Junius R. Jayawardene, in an unexpected move, has restored civic rights to former Prime Minister Sirimauo Bandaranaike. The president gave Mrs. Bandaranaike a pardon, allowing her to resume full political activities after a five-year break.

Political analysts said that the former prime minister was expected to play a major role in finding a solution to the conflict between the majority Sinhalese people and the minority Tamils.

Mrs. Bandaranaike had been barred from contesting elections and holding public office since Parliament removed her civic rights and expelled her from the assembly for seven years in October 1980. Mrs. Bandaranaike indicated she planned a political comeback and demanded a general election.

"The biggest problem facing the country today is the ethnic issue," she said at her Colombo residence. "Have a general election and let the people decide."

But Mrs. Bandaranaike, 69, who was prime minister from 1960 to 1965 and again from 1970 to 1977, kept the country guessing about her immediate plans, saying she had not decided on her next step. "The door is now open for her to return to Parliament, even as the opposition leader, and also play a vital role in future ethnic crisis related matters," said Tikiri Banda Ilangaratne, leader of the rival People's Party.

The constitution allows Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party to ask one of its members in Parliament to resign and nominate her as a replacement.

The country was speculating why Mr. Jayawardene decided at this time to allow his arch rival to return to active politics. Mrs. Bandaranaike said she thought Mr. Jayawardene acted under international and local pressure. Sources said the Indian prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, who is trying to help find a solution to the ethnic conflict, had urged Mr. Jayawardene to return her rights.

Mrs. Bandaranaike leads the island's largest opposition party, and without her help it would be difficult to implement any decision made by Mr. Jayawardene on the conflict, analysts said.

By Courtesy of International Herald Tribune (January 3, 1986)

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